Palace: GMA too busy to attend historic session

By Christian V. Esguerra

SHE'S TOO BUSY TO ATTEND EVEN A joint session of Congress that lawmakers are unanimously saying is one for history.

And one of her spokespersons say it's too bad some legislators didn't get the entertainment they may have been looking forward to.

President Macapagal-Arroyo skipped Wednesday's unprecedented joint session of Congress on the imposition of martial law in Maguindanao because

PALACE, A10

NEWS / A10

Police find P54M in cocaine in old Davao airport

WORLD / A26

World's largest polluters trade barbs at summit

SPORTS / A28

Jins Rivero, Briones bag two golds

NEWS / A2

Time Magazine honors 'Ondoy' hero, savior of 30

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Friday, December 11, 2009 ★★ Vol. 25 / No. 3

US study: Ultra-clean kids prone to adult ills

WASHINGTON—PARents who let their kids romp in the mud and eat food that has fallen on the floor could be helping to protect them against maladies like heart disease later

US STUDY, A11

'Murder raps may be buried'

Rebellion could be way out for clan, says Gordon

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Michael Lim Ubac and Leila B. Salaverria

REBELLION CAN BE A DEfense against murder charges.

Sen. Richard Gordon declared on the second day of the joint session of Congress that was convened to deliberate on the declaration of martial law in Maguindanao.

The joint session of Congress may revoke or support the martial law proclamation by a simple majority vote, or 147 votes.

The session adjourned at 9:58 p.m. It will resume on Monday, Dec. 14, at 4 p.m.

Other senators warned that the imposition of martial law could exonerate the Ampatuans from their involvement in the massacre of 57 people in

MURDER, A17

Petitions to high court stopping '1959' now total 7

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

ONE OF THE DRAFTERS OF THE 1987 Constitution has also asked the Supreme Court to nullify President Macapagal-Arroyo's imposition of martial law in Maguindanao purportedly to effect the arrest of members of the powerful Ampatuan clan believed responsible for the Nov. 23 massacre of 57 people.

In a petition filed yesterday, Christian Monsod, a member of the 1986 Constitutional Commission and a former chair of the Commission on Elections, and Antero de Murilla University lawyer Carlos Medina Jr. said there was no factual basis for Presidential Proclamation No. 1959 because there was no actual rebellion or invasion—the only grounds for martial law

PETITIONS, A8

MURDERS MOST FOUL Protesters carry mock coffins symbolizing the 57 victims of the Maguindanao massacre to mark International Human Rights Day. The protest was held at the National Bureau of Investigation office in Manila where Mayor Andal Ampatuan Jr., principal accused in the killings, is detained.

SCHOOLCHILDREN, TOO

Gunmen abduct 75 in Agusan

By Jocelle R. Badilla
Inquirer Mindanao
and Jocelyn R. Uy
in Manila

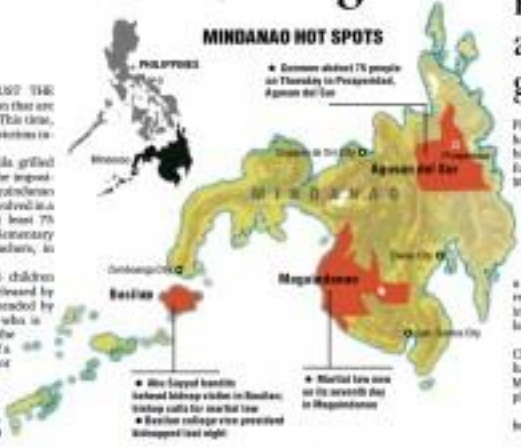
DAVAO CITY—IT ISN'T JUST THE gunmen of the Ampatuan clan that are sowing terror in Mindanao. This time, a rebel group struck and the victims included schoolchildren.

While lawmakers in Manila grilled administration officials on the imposition of martial law in Maguindanao province, an armed group involved in a clan war yesterday took at least 75 people hostage, including elementary school pupils and their teachers, in Agusan del Sur.

Seven hours later, all 16 children among the hostages were released by their captors, purportedly headed by former Cafga Undo Perez, who is wanted in a case involving the killing of several members of a neighbor's family, said Senior Supt. Nestor Pajara.

Chief Supt. Leo Calliganan, Caraga regional police director, described the Perez group

GUNMEN, A19



Abu behead hostage; college VP kidnapped

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—GUNMEN LAST night seized the vice president of state-owned Basilan State College in Isabela City on nearby Basilan Island, a day after the severed head of a factory worker kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf bandits was recovered near the city plaza.

The college executive, Orlando Pajarito, was inside his house just across the school in Sumagdang, Isabela, when he was abducted by unidentified armed men riding in a van at around 7:30 p.m., Basilan Vice Gov. Al Rashied Sakkalbal said.

Pajarito was whisked into the van.

Yet abandoned van, believed to be the same vehicle used by the suspects, was recovered 30 minutes after the ex-

ABU BEHEAD, A19

₱7-B cash gift approved for gov't workers

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has approved the release of at least ₱7 billion to cover an additional cash gift for national government workers, Malacañang said yesterday.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said the cash gift, ranging from ₱7,000 to ₱50,000, would be released to the 1.1 million national civil servants beginning next week.

"It will be a minimum of ₱7,000 and a maximum of ₱10,000," Andaya told reporters in Malacañang. "We're drafting the guidelines, and we will start releasing next week."

The cash gift comes on top of the Christmas bonus that the government had released in two installments in late May and mid-November to the employees.

"This is the last bonus that we've all been waiting for," said Bebdad Gania-

P7-B CASH, A19

FIRING LINE AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Victor Ibrado, acting Defense Secretary Norberto Gonzales, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera attend the historic joint session of Congress on martial law in Maguindanao.

Gov't starts filling 'civilian vacuum;' ARMM gov named

By Jocelyn R. Uy
and Christine O. Avendaño

IT SEEMED LIKE AN AFTERTHOUGHT.

Vice Gov. Amanullah Adiong yesterday took over as acting governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) after Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan was implicated in the Nov. 23 massacre of 57 supporters of a political rival and media people.

That's after Sen. Edgardo Angara pointed out in reporters that a "civilian vacuum" had crippled the ARMM administration.

Angara told reporters that he was "amazed" and "saddened" that those implementing martial law had forgotten to restore civilian authority nearly

GOVT STARTS, A6

Ampatuan car collection awes soldiers: 'What an arrogant display of wealth!'

By Marlon Ramos
and Inquirer Mindanao

SHARIFF AGUAK, MAGUINDANAO—A fleet of luxury vehicles yesterday greeted soldiers searching for weapons at the sprawling home of Maguindanao warlord Andal Ampatuan Sr., whose family has been blamed for the Nov. 23 massacre of 57 people.

Armed with metal detectors and shovels, the troops uncovered an arms cache in a corn dryer beside the Ampatuan mansion.

In nearby Ampatuan town last night, gunmen opened fire on a military convoy carrying evidence against the Ampatuans to General Santos City

at around 8 p.m., but there were no immediate reports of fatalities.

Bursts of gunfire could still be heard 30 minutes later several meters from an Army checkpoint, reporters at the scene said.

A dazzling array of sport utility vehicles in an old stable amazed soldiers conducting the raid in the Ampatuan compound in the heart of an impoverished region. It resembled a showroom of expensive cars in Makati City.

"What an arrogant display of wealth!" said a disabled Army colonel.

Among the vehicles were a military-type sports truck Humvee, a Toyota Land Cruiser, a Chevrolet Suburban, a

AMPATUAN, A10

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

6/49 12 29 27 17 6 7

SUERTRES 9 9 5 9 3 8 1 1 6

6/55 LUZ-VIS-MIN 6 1 4 3 9 8

6/42 LUZ-VIS-MIN 2 4 12 22 34 37 P9,182,354.40

SUPER LOTTO 6/49 11 18 27 30 34 44 P46,742,288.40

Why Satur, Liza joined NP

By Jerry E. Esplanada

THE NACIONALISTA PARTY (NP) WAS THE ONLY political group that welcomed the leftist Bayan Muna and its "Makabayan (Nationalist)" platform, according to Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo, adding this was the main reason why he and Rep. Liza Maza joined the party.

NP standard-bearer Manny Villar "welcomed Liza Maza [of feminist] and me to be NP guest senatorial candidates" in the May 2010 elections, Ocampo told the Inquirer yesterday. But Liberal Party presidential candidate Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino "gave no such opening for us to the LP senatorial slate," he added.

"Among all the presidential aspirants in the opposition we talked with, Manny Villar, Loren Legarda and Fidel Ramos, [Erap] Estrada came closest in agreeing with our Makabayan platform. Loren and Chiz [Escudero] met us, so we pursued talks with Manny and also Noynoy. We had talked with Sen. [Jinggoy] Estrada earlier," Ocampo said.

OCAMPO

MAZA

NP-KBL breakup

Ocampo and Maza had initially planned to contest Senate seats under the NP but they reconsidered after Villar's party forged an alliance with the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL).

Later, the NP set aside its alliance with the KBL "due to issues internal to the KBL." But it was widely speculated that the two leftist leaders' insistence on a breakup as a condition for their joining the NP indeed prompted the move.

KBL Rep. Ferdinand "Bong-bong" Marcos Jr. had welcomed the prospect of working with activists like Ocampo, who was imprisoned by the martial law regime of his father, the late President Ferdinand Marcos, in the 1970s.

According to the younger Marcos, "despite what differences we may have and other things, the main issues we agree on are what's important."

Guest candidate

Marcos will remain on the NP senatorial lineup as a guest candidate, according to party spokesperson Gilbert Remulla.

Ocampo and Maza had filed their certificates of candidacy as independent senatorial candidates under Makabayan, a coalition formed by political groups as their political vehicle for the 2010 elections.

Bayan Muna, which topped the 2001 and 2004 party-list polls, was formed on Sept. 22, 2000 by several organizations which held the ground for what they called a "new alternative party in Philippine politics."

The new party was the "successor and embodiment of all the ideas and ideals it seeks to uphold: people first, their interests and welfare above all," said the Bayan Muna website.

Makabayan platform

Under its Makabayan platform, the party aims to "assert national sovereignty and independence from foreign domination and control, promote a self-reliant and ecologically sound economic development through genuine land reform, national industrialization and protection of the environment;

Uphold the social and economic welfare of workers, peasants and other marginalized sectors; guarantee the right to self-determination of the Bangsa Moro, Cordillera and other indigenous peoples; and advocate a comprehensive policy on peace negotiations.

According to Ocampo, the party endorsed the "aspirations of the most oppressed and the least heard—workers, peasants, Moros, indigenous peoples, urban poor and other downtrodden Filipinos."

SAVIOR OF 30

Time honors 'Ondoy' hero

MERLINDA MAGALLANES, the 18-year-old Filipino construction worker who braved rampaging floods during Tropical Storm "Ondoy" in September to save the lives of 30 relatives and neighbors only to lose his own life has been named one of Time magazine's top 30 heroes of 2009.

"With the time the storm had unleashed on full fury, bringing the worst rains the region had seen in more than 40 years, Magallanes had changed the lives of dozens of family members and neighbors—and lost his own," Time said on its website.

Magallanes, a powerful swimmer, helped evacuate his family to higher ground after a river new their house in Barangay Nagtieg, Olongapo in Zambales City over Bowed.

After making sure his parents and siblings were safe, Magallanes went back to help their neighbors who were trapped on their rooftops.

After several trips, he had managed to save 30 people, according to witnesses, including a 6-month-old girl who was about to be swept away in a bituminous box.

"I am going to be forever grateful to Merlinda. He gave his life for my baby. I will never forget his sacrifice," said Blanchie Ibañez, the mother of the baby girl Magallanes saved.

Relatives recounted how Magallanes "came from nowhere" to grab them and take them to safety.

"And then he was gone," Ibañez said.

The rediscovered Magallanes was simply washed away by the strong current, she said.

His body was found the following morning, with that of 26 others who also perished in the flood.

Apart from the tributes from the families he saved, Magallanes was also honored by the Philippine Senate which cited him for his "bold and selfless act."

Aside from Magallanes, Time also cited Afghan journalist Ibrahim Moradi, banker Leonard Abess, activist Tae Zaneer, University of California police officers Lisa Campbell and Ally Jacobs, police officers Kimberley Shanley and Mark Todd, Mike Perham, Neda Agha-Soltan, skipcaptain Richard Phillips who escaped from Somali pirates, and pilot Capt. Chesley Sullenberger who landed his stricken plane for safety in the Hudson River in New York City.

The list of top 10 heroes was one of the 30 lists in Time's "2009: Top 30 Heroes of 2009," which was aimed at "charting the highs and lows of the past year." *Inquirer Research*

100% Recognised Australian Education Qualifications at 50% Cheaper*

Clark Education City is an International College located in Clark Freeport Zone, Pampanga and run by the Australian International Training and Management Group (AITMG). AITMG offers Australian qualifications which provide global opportunities, potential career advancements, and much more.

Our Australian College Representatives Will Be Available for Obligation Free Consultations

AITMG have Australian representatives who will be available for consultations to answer any questions you may have. If you are interested in Australian qualifications, international job opportunities and/or further study pathways, please visit them to learn more.

Where: Intercontinental Hotel, 1 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Manila (enquire at front desk for direction)
When: December 12 (Saturday) 1.00pm-8.00pm

Helping Our Students Find International Job Opportunities

AITMG is currently developing special relationships with multi-national corporations and international universities to provide our graduates with the best possible chances for job placement opportunities and further study pathways.

- Auto Mechanical
- Construction
- Electrical
- Engineering
- English Language
- Hairdressing
- Healthcare
- Hotel Management
- Plumbing
- Professional
- Refrigeration
- Services

If you are serious about your future then you do not want to miss this great opportunity.

Reserve a consultation at jwills@aitmg.com.au
For more information: text 'Information' + your name and age to 0915 707 6128

*Based on estimates taken from Australian living and study costs

Australian Qualifications - Global Pathways - International Job Opportunities
AITMG
www.aitmg.com.au

Let's begin your exciting Home Furnishings Journey this Christmas

75% OFF

Festive SALE

SMART FURNITURE

RP qualifies for aid from millennium fund

THE PHILIPPINES has again qualified for financial support from the US Millennium Challenge Corp. (MCC) in 2010, according to Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo.

The MCC, the US aid agency that helps developing countries meet the goals of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, has again judged the Philippines as "compact eligible" which would qualify it for a large-scale grant in fiscal year 2010, Romulo said.

Under the Millennium Development Goals, the Philippines and other members of the United Nations have set a goal of reducing poverty incidences by half by 2015, and eliminating extreme poverty by 2015.

Resolution

This is the third time that the Philippines has been endorsed as compact-eligible under the MCC's Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) program by the MCC board chaired by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

"The resolution reaffirms both the MCC's confidence in the Philippines' high capacity as development partners and the Philippines' unwavering highest level of political commitment to good governance," Romulo said in a statement released shortly after the MCC board meeting in Washington, D.C.

MCC noted that in fiscal year 2010, the Philippines and Indonesia graduated from the low income country category to the lower middle-income country category.

Graduation to a higher income category can affect approval of a country's application for funding proposals under the MCA.

In her visit to Manila last month, Clinton said "the Philippines should not be penalized for its own success," referring to the Philippines having been reclassified from a low-income country to a lower-middle-income country.

Interpreting Republic Act 9455 or the Philippine Fiscal Incentives Management Act, Secretary of Finance Margarito B. Teves said the Philippines is applying for MCC funding for three high-impact projects—secondary National Roads Improvement (SNRI); the Rapid-Bus Transit System; Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalusugan CIDSS) and the Integrated Revenue Information System (IRIS).

The MCC is also to the process of reviewing a Philippine plan of action to address policy performance issues like control of corruption to qualify for MCA funding.

Since its creation in 2006, the MCC has approved over $7 billion in poverty reduction compacts with 20 partner countries.

Cynthia D. Balana

Metrobank
BLIMS super holidays sale
LOOK FOR THE COLOR-CODED TAGS FOR SUPER DISCOUNTS!
UP TO 60% OFF ON CLOSEOUT ITEMS
UP TO 50% OFF ON INVENTORY ITEMS
UP TO 40% OFF ON CHRISTMAS SPECIALS
0% INTEREST
WIN Nissan Navara
40 appliances, furniture and gadgets!
defining lifestyles
BLIMS fine furniture
FREE BLIMS Gift Certificate
when you use your Metrobank Credit Card!
P500 GC for a minimum single receipt purchase of P25,000
P1,000 GC for a minimum single receipt purchase of P50,000
Visit a BLIMS Store near you today!
Metrobank
You're in good hands.

TEMPUR
Share the gift of comfort with Tempur
FREE Chair Indoor Grill
TEMPUR pillows and mattresses contour to your body and relieve pain and pressure while being the only NASA certified viscoelastic material.
SPACE

MERRY MERRY PRIZES!
DORA THE EXPLORER
Get a chance to win one of the wonderful Dora the Explorer items up for grabs.
Pick a coupon for every P1000 single receipt purchase and see if you get one of these items: a multi-purpose storage, sandy sprinkler, pail or a water jug.
Double your chances of winning when you shop using your Citi card.
Promo runs from December 8, 2009 to January 9, 2010
citi
ROBINSONS Malls
PARTICIPATING MALLS: Robinsons Galleria • Robinsons Place Manila • Forum Robinsons • Robinsons Metro East • Robinsons Novaliches • Robinsons Place Iloilo • Robinsons Place Cebu • Robinsons Place Antipolo • Robinsons Place Dumaguete • Robinsons Starmall Bacolod • Robinsons Place Bacolod • Robinsons Place Lipa • Robinsons Starmills Pampanga • Robinsons Place Angeles • Robinsons Lucena • Robinsons Place Iloilo • Robinsons Place Tacloban • Robinsons Place Dumaguete • Robinsons Cagayan de Oro • Robinsons Cybergate Davao • Robinsons Place General Santos

Duque appointment has 'em guessing

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

SO IS DR. OR IS HE NOT THE new chair of the Civil Service Commission (CSC)?

Ace Sec Health Secretary Francisco Duque III has not received his appointment papers from Malacañang although the medical community is abuzz about his appointment having already come down.

Malacañang is looking for someone to head the CSC after the lecanvesal Commission on Appointments (CA) rejected former Presidential Management Staff chief Ricardo Saludo for the post.

No papers yet

Duque's name came up last week as a likely candidate. People in the medical community said he had already been appointed CSC chair.

But Dr. Robert Su, Duque's chief of staff, said they had not received copies of the nomination papers that would have been forwarded by Malacañang to the CA if Duque had been appointed.

"And the secretary wouldn't still need to go through the CA before he can assume (the CSC chair)," Su said.

Presidential appointments have to be confirmed by the CA.

While Duque has reportedly recommended Undersecretary Mario Villaverde to be acting health secretary in case he is appointed to the CSC, Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral has also been mentioned as a possible successor.

Renowned cardiologist

Like Duque, Cabral is a physician. She is a renowned cardiologist and clinical pharmacologist.

CABRAL

DUQUE

Duque was chair of the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) before being appointed health secretary in 2008.

If he moves to the CSC, his term would end in 2016. As health secretary, his term is coterminous with President Macapagal-Arroyo's on June 2010.

3 gov't bureaus launch drive vs traffickers, illegal aliens

THE IMMIGRATION, CUSTOMS AND QUARantine bureaus agreed yesterday to jointly establish a one-stop shop for foreigners in the major ports of the country to bolster the government's campaign against smuggling of goods and human trafficking and prevent the entry of aliens with infectious diseases.

The creation of the Synergic Partnership on Immigration, Customs and Quarantine Enforcement (SPICQE) was formalized in a memorandum of agreement (MOA) signed by Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan, Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales and Quarantine Director Edgardo Saldaniana at the Bureau of Immigration main building in Intramuros, Manila.

Libanan hailed the creation of the one-stop shop in a giant step in the government's drive to curb the smuggling and human trafficking by preventing aliens engaged in such illegal activities and those afflicted with contagious diseases from entering the country.

In a statement, the immigration bureau said the SPICQE centers in the major airports and seaports will "surely strengthen our capability to thwart the entry of foreign smugglers and human traffickers and those who pose a threat to the health and well-being of our people."

Under the MOA, the three bureaus agreed to establish joint port operations facilities in selected ports that shall serve as special customs-immigration-quarantine-security (SIQS) enforcement officers capable of handling limited customs and immigration transactions.

They also agreed to jointly accredit, designate or authorize government officials to commission ports of the country to perform limited customs and immigration functions to prevent such ports from being used as alternative entry points for illegal aliens and smugglers.

Data center

The agencies will next establish a data center to facilitate the sharing and exchange of information on suspected illegal aliens, foreign fugitives, and smuggled cargo that can be immediately enforced or turned back if they attempt to enter the country.

The MOA provides that the heads of the immigration, customs and quarantine bureaus shall alternately head a Joint Chiefs of SIQ Enforcement Bureaus (JCSIQEB) whose day-to-day operations shall be managed by an executive officer.

Technical working groups from the three agencies have yet to draft the implementing rules and regulations of the MOA before these are forwarded to the secretaries of justice, finance and health for their approval.

Corrections

IN THE DEC. 6 ISSUE, the Second Front Page banner story—"Colombo wants Maguindanao ballot boxes"—mentioned that elected interpreter Sc is a former governor of the no. Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Ampatuan never held the said position.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 9 ISSUE, a caption on Pages 14 and 15 misnamed the owner of a Hyundai official. The Hyundai official's name is Edward Go—not Ramon Goh.

* * *

THE SAME CAPTION misstated Go's position. He is the chair of Hyundai Asia Resources Inc.—not the president of Hyundai E. Boulevgaro.

* * *

THE SAME CAPTION misstated the position of another Hyundai official. Its signals is the president and chief executive officer... not managing director... of Hyundai Asia Resources.

The Daily Gospel

Friday December 11, 2009
2nd Week of Advent
Feriarum I

1st Reading: Is 48:17-19
Gospel: Mt 11:16-19

Jesus said to the crowds, "How to what can I compare the people of this day? They are like children sitting in the marketplace, about whom their companions complain: We played the flute for you but you would not dance. We sang a dirge to you but you would not cry."

"For John came fasting and people said, 'He is possessed.' Then the Son of Man came, he ate and drank, and people said, 'Look at this man! A glutton and drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet the outcome will prove Wisdom to be right."

Comment:

If there is one lesson that all leaders have, it is that they cannot please everyone. The most important person for any of us to please is God. When God calls us to a particular mission, He sends us to be faithful to His calling. At times, that means sacrificing an unpopular cause. Often, when we do things based on human respect, we end up becoming unhappy because we don't please God and we don't feel fulfilled. Indifferent ones who live a life according to the purpose for which we were made. God has designed us all with a purpose, especially one in Me, and that gives us the inner peace and the gifts needed to fulfill that mission.

Whatever distracts us from the happiness we desire to do God's will, we choose to ignore the path that brings us fulfillment, the path that brings us happiness. If we want to be happy in this life, then we have to do what God tells us, mend the road that He shows us, become only He, who designed us, knows why He designed us. Let's take God's route, even if it means taking the unpopular choice.

UN commends RP military peacekeepers in Liberia

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE UNITED NATIONS has commended Filipino peacekeepers in Liberia for executing their duties with "dignity and professionalism and for doing so always with a smile," according to the Philippine mission to the UN in New York.

Ambassador Libran Cabactulan Jr., Philippine permanent representative to the UN in New York, said in his report to the home office that 120 members of the 12th Philippine Contingent serving with the UN Mission in Liberia (Unmil) received UN peacekeeping medals from UN Ambassador Ellen Margrethe Loej in ceremonies in the capital, Monrovia, on Tuesday.

In her speech, Loej, the Special Representative of the Secretary General and head of Unmil, expressed her appreciation to the Filipino peacekeepers led by Lt. Col. Vicente Cargo-Chi Sumao for their hard work and contributions to peacekeeping efforts in Liberia.

Loej also applauded the security and defense platoons responsible for arms, patrol and security patrols at Unmil headquarters, for carrying out their tasks with discipline and vigor.

Philippine proverb

Referring to the community-outreach activities of the members of the 12th Philippine Contingent, the UN envoy quoted a Philippine proverb, which says: "It is easy to be human, but a challenge to be humane."

Lt. Col. Sumao thanked the Filipino peacekeepers for the closing days of the four-month area tour Camp Shupis in Monrovia.

She also noted their plans to conduct humanitarian assistance to orphanages in collaboration with religious leaders in Monrovia over the Christmas holidays.

The Philippines has a total of 116 peacekeepers from the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police serving in Unmil. Of this number, 115 are attached to the Force Headquarters Security Unit responsible for securing Unmil Headquarters. Two are assigned to Unmil staff officers, and 20 are UN police officers.

The Philippines also has peacekeepers supporting UN operations in Afghanistan, Timor Leste, Darfur, the Golan Heights, Haiti, Kashmir, Sudan and Timor Leste.

DANDE

Japan aid for Phivolcs

THE JAPANESE GOVernment has committed to help the Philippines with a supply of sophisticated equipment for monitoring earthquakes through a zero five-year project.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency said in a statement it has signed with the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology an agreement for the project dubbed "Enhancement of earthquake and volcano monitoring and effective utilization of disaster mitigation information in the Philippines."

The new aid comes in the wake of the January up last month of a P1.6-billion grant for the installation of Doppler radar system for monitoring typhoons in the eastern Philippine seaboard.

In what is said to be the single-biggest Japanese-assisted project provided to the Philippines, JICA is providing funds for the installation of Doppler radars in Camarines, Cagayan and Eastern Samar. Ronnel W. Domingo

DRAGON FIREWORKS
The only ISO 9001:2008 and Bureau of Product Standards' Product Safety Mark certified fireworks company.
We Welcome Distributors
Distributed by: Trino International Traders
Tel. No.: 331-4221, 331-6759 and 712-5804
Email: dtfireworks@yahoo.com

FOR YOUR SHOPPING CONVENIENCE

ELECTROWORLD
SHOP NOW PAY IN 2010
Pay Next Year on over 30 types of credit cards
Truly a hassle free CAMERA
OLYMPUS

NOW for only P9,995
before P11,995

Enjoy these great fares at singaporeair.com

MILAN US$1,007
ROME US$1,008
PARIS US$1,046

Telcos say they're complying with new billing scheme

Quality drains for your home
eric FLOOR DRAINS
SAN-EI
FANSKI

By Paolo C. Montecillo

DOMESTIC CARRIER SMART Communications Inc. is standing its ground, insisting that it has done enough to comply with a new billing scheme that charges subscribers per pulse instead of per minute of a voice call.

In a statement, the mobile brand of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) said that giving subscribers the option of being billed per pulse or the prevailing per minute of a call was all that the government had ordered.

Last Saturday, the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) order to local mobile operators to switch to the new billing scheme came into effect.

The per pulse billing scheme does not bring down the basic cost of a voice call, but direct calls would be cheaper since they would be charged based on actual use rounded up to the next pulse.

Under the per minute billing scheme, subscribers are charged for the entire minute even if they only used a few seconds of the call.

Globe Telecom earlier announced that it was also complying with NTC Memorandum Circular No. 08-07-2009.

Globe said it had made available in Globe calls offer to all subscribers offering per pulse billing system.

Dial 211

The company said it had chosen to enable change notification per second pulse and without an outright flag down charge even if the NTC allows carriers to charge a premium flag down rate.

By dialing the prefix 211 for Globe subscribers and 1052 for TM subscribers, calls will be charged only 30 centavos per second from Monday to Saturday and five centavos on Sunday, the company said.

NTC officials earlier this week said the regulations were conclusive local telcos found ignoring the order.

But Smart said that giving subscribers the option of being charged per pulse or per minute was what the order mandated.

This was in contrast to earlier statements made by NTC officials—and Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, proponent of the pulse billing system—that the new scheme was to be the default system for charging calls.

Mandatory review

The NTC ordered the phone companies to begin charging per pulse for calls made within a network last Sunday. The second phase, which mandates per pulse charging for calls made between networks, takes effect on Dec. 14.

"It is our position that Smart has abided by the order," the company said in a statement.

Smart said that the NTC order being a quasi-judicial action, there was a mandatory 15-day review period from the date of issuance before companies are bound by law to comply. This is view-track on Dec. 21.

Despite the fact that the NTC order is not yet final and unwieldy as a matter of good faith, Smart has completed the necessary adjustments in our billing system so that it has been able to put into effect the new per pulse billing rates effective Dec. 6, 2009," the company said.

To avail of the new service, subscribers have to type in a numeric prefix before dialing the 11-digit mobile numbers being called.

"The use of prefix numbers is consistent with the NTC circular issued on July 21, which mandates that subscribers be given the freedom to choose between the un-covered [and the per-minute-charging]," the company said.

TOSHIBA
Leading Innovation >>>
Windows®. Life without Walls™. Toshiba recommends Windows 7.
360° Hotshot
The Toshiba Satellite L510
Every way you look at it, we're picture-perfect
Now with Windows 7. Your PC, simplified.
Windows 7
Satellite L510-S437
SUPERIOR DESIGN
P3,999.16
Netbook NB200-A101
P2,249.17
FREE
PORTÉGÉ T110-P110
P3,332.50
Qosmio F50-AV533
P7,499.17
800-6626 Inquire
www.pc.toshiba-asia.com Information
Toshiba Authorized Retailers Visit
Talk 2 Toshiba
Do more
genuine
beyond freedom
TSMM 200911

RP sailors to undergo training vs pirates

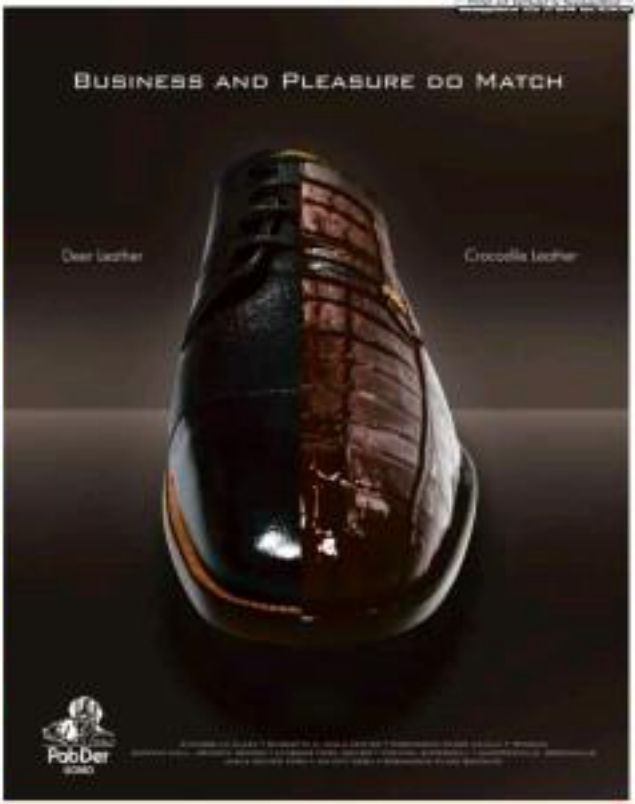
FILIPINO SEAMEN will begin undergoing anti-piracy training next January to help them cope better in hostage situations, according to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

Because of the persistent threats and increasing power of pirates in the Gulf of Aden and other waters, the DOLE and the private sector will work together to provide Filipino maritime workers the tools and skills to cope with hijackings, said Labor Secretary Marianito Roque.

"Definitely, our overseas Filipino pirates but what we are trying to do is to prepare our people for it so that we will have higher success rate and they won't undergo much stress," Roque told reporters following a meeting with manning and maritime agencies.

Roque said the training would be invaluable as the pirates have become bolder, even venturing into the Indian Ocean.

Kristine L. Alave



Gov't starts filling 'civilian vacuum;' ARMM ...

From page A1

three weeks after the massacre, informing its Lt. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer, appointed martial law administrator.

Ahlong had told Angara during Tuesday night's Senate budget hearing of the AMMR's proposed PP 4 billion budget that he had not yet assumed the governorship.

"After 17 days, why is there no civilian authority? Who is minding the store?" Angara told reporters. "This is more worrying than the martial rule there."

For almost three days, the ARMM's office of regional governor and its sub-offices were published. Binghayan

WATERPROOF HEARING AID
09338810332
SAN LUIS MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
www.sanlusmed.net

DRAGON FIREWORKS
SAFE, QUALITY FIREWORKS IS OUR COMMITMENT
WELCOME DEALER
Free Delivery
Distributed by: DEY ENTERPRISES
Tel. No.: 421-6135 • 911-2981 • 421-7184
Cel. No.: 0917-807-0966
Email: dragonfireworks_dey@yahoo.com.ph
Website: www.dragonfireworks.com.ph
Major Credit Card Accepted
MasterCard VISA

loosened a sigh of relief after they were allowed to reach Wednesday.

Governor Binghamin had been practically under house arrest following the mass murder. Police took him under custody after martial law was declared in Maguindanao on Friday. He was later charged with rebellion, along with six other members of the Ampatuan clan.

"Normalcy is beginning to return today in the province by the appointment of the new acting regional governor," said Interior Secretary Bernardo Pardo, who administered the oath to Ahlong at Camp Crame yesterday.

Pardo stressed that Ahlong's oath-taking was proof that the Constitution remained in effect and a civilian government was still in place even as martial law was being implemented.

"The courts will remain functioning and all other aspects of normal governance will continue to exist and what we are doing today is evidence of this," he said.

"This will act to institute a lot of other events that will be intended

TURNOVER Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno (right) swears in ARMM Vice Gov. Amanodin Ahlong as acting governor of the autonomous region. President Arroyo earlier authorized Puno to exercise administrative control over the region, including the power to suspend local officials suspected of having a hand in the Maguindanao massacre.

by the autonomous region and by the (lacking) government to effect normalcy in the province of Maguindanao and the entire ARMM."

Ahlong vowed to serve with "utmost integrity and effectiveness." He urged the people to respect all lawful processes in the investigation of the massacre.

Vacant posts to be filled

Puno said one of the important matters that Ahlong must address immediately is the appointment of officers in charge to vacated positions due to the arrests of suspects in the massacre.

Government services in Maguindanao as well as in its many towns ruled by the powerful Ampatuans have halted because of the disappearances or the "inaccessibility" of local officials, he claimed.

"So with the assumption into office of the acting regional governor, we will begin by filling up the vacancies in the autonomous regional government," Puno said.

He stressed that to bring Maguindanao back to normalcy would help the national government remove "some conditions of rebellion that existed" and finally lift martial law.

Threats of clashes

But the military yesterday feared the possibility of more clashes with armed supporters of the Ampatuans following a land encounter on Thursday.

"We have started positioning our troops today but there is no actual firefight and we are still hopeful that they will surrender," said Lt. Col. Romeo Brawner Jr.

The spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines said that the military was monitoring seven municipalities where these groups had dispersed.

Puno said that of the 2,000 men in various armed groups supporting the Ampatuans, 1,217 had been deployed strategically and roughly 400 of them, described as a "dangerous group," were roaming from one town to another. With a report from Charlie Arthur, Inquirer Mindanao

Petitions to high court stopping ...

From page A1

that are allowed under the Constitution.

A similar petition was filed on Wednesday by lawyers led by University of the Philippines law dean Marvic Leonen, Bayan party-list representatives, and members of Magsalohan.

The number of petitions filed with the Supreme Court questioning the martial law proclamation now totals seven.

Only Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, other Cabinet officials, and the heads of the Armed Forces and Philippine National Police were named as respondents in the two latest petitions.

While Congress is debating whether to uphold PP 1959, the Supreme Court has given the government until Dec. 14 to reply to the petitions.

Grouping at views

In their petitions, Bautista and Medina said there was "absolutely no factual or legal basis to support the finding of existence of rebellion."

They said there was no declaration by the Ampatuans or their supporters of an intent to overthrow the government or of any public uprising by them that would endanger public safety.

Bautista and Medina also said there was "no showing that the alleged failure or inaction of the local judicial system and other government mechanisms in Maguindanao endangered public safety."

"It is evident that the President and respondents deviated from the declared grouping as threats and acts of lawless violence and depredation committed by various persons and groups without any connection with the Ampatuans," they said.

They added that the exercise of Mr Arroyo's power as Commander-in-Chief to call out the military had sufficiently removed public safety.

In their own petition, Leonen et al. said the Cabinet officials' public statements to back the President's decision to impose martial law in Maguindanao "do not establish the existence of an actual rebellion that would justify the issuance of [PP] 1959."

Leonen's co-petitioners include lawyers Theodore Te and Rowena Gutierrez, Akbayan Representatives Risa Hontiveros, Antonio Akbayan Roy Ella Bautista, and Magsalohan residents Ruben Mastrard, Sergio Sabaot and Datoher Ulos.

No armed uprising

Leonen et al. said the report submitted by Ermita to Congress also "fails to establish the existence of rebellion."

"The mere presence of armed groups without a clearly statement as to their armed capacity or intention to overtake and permanently topple the face of rebellion or invasion," they said, adding:

"If there is a rogue provincial or local government official who has committed crimes and acted in the area have ceased, refused or have otherwise been unable to perform their functions."

They also pointed out that rebellion required a "public armed uprising, and an assertion of the act has been made, much less substantiated."

They added: "It should be apparent that the mere existence of governors of, flees does not inescapably lead to the conclusion that the Chief Executive has been deprived of her powers, much less that the warrants secured by them under affront have been removed from allegiance to the government."

The petitions like petitions were filed by lawyers led by Solicitor Frederick Siervo Sabanga, former UP law dean Raul Pangalangan and Harry Roque Jr., Ampatuan defense counsel Sigfrid Fortun and fellow lawyer Albert Leo Angeles, Magsalohan Rep. Didagen Dilangalen (1st district), the National Union of People's Lawyers and labor groups; and law students Joseph Mel-ron Loyola.

The petitioners all insisted there was no factual basis for PP 1959.

Murder, not rebellion

The group called Solidarity of Government Officials (SGO) warned that the imposition of martial law in Maguindanao could be a pretext to clear the Ampatuans of involvement in the massacre and control the vote-rich province for the 2010 elections.

In a statement, the SGO aired concerns that the steps being taken by the government under martial law might be "successfully challenged" to the Supreme Court and eventually "allow the masterminds to control the" crime scene.

"While seemingly answering the public clamor for justice for the victims, the foreign administration may be laying the foundation for justice to be denied," the SGO said.

"It was murder in Maguindanao, not rebellion. Being staunch allies of the Arroyo administration, it is incredible that the Maguindanao leaders to go against that administration," it said.

Apprehension has been aired that under martial law, the Ampatuans would be charged with rebellion only that the murder charge would be subsumed under it, and that after conviction, they could seek amnesty. (See related story on page A1.)

But Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera has said the rebellion and murder charges would be pursued separately.

MORRO

Pilot test?

The SGO also said it was concerned that PP 1959 allowed the administration "to control access to and limit the movement of persons in areas covered by the proclamation ... during elections."

The Ampatuans dominate the local political scene in Maguindanao and the administration ticket in the 2004 and 2007 elections.

Echoing earlier observations, the SGO said it was "deeply concerned" that Maguindanao may be a pilot test for martial law in other parts of the country and eventually the whole Philippines."

It said that by declaring martial law, Mrs Arroyo had lost her right to remain in power.

"The declaration of martial law is the desperate move of an administration that has lost the trust of the Filipino people. It is an act of betrayal ... that precludes her right to govern [and] that has [no] right to remain in power," the SGO said.

It called on Mr Arroyo to quit the presidency "so that her successor may lift the declaration of martial law, restore peace and order ruling police powers, and preside over clean and honest elections in May 2010." With a report from JJ Burgonio

Cash&Carry
MALL & SUPERMARKET
ANNIVERSARY
BLOW-OUT
SALE
Dec. 11 to 13
Mall Hours: 10AM to 10PM
Supermarket Hours: 9AM to 10PM
UP TO 70% OFF SELECTED ITEMS
Get as much as 50% OFF
SALE DATE: DEC. 12 ONLY
SEE POSTING FOR DETAILS
DEVANT
NEXTBASE
Christmas Serenades
Meet and Greet Santa
Dec. 13 to 22
SIMBANG GABI
Starting Dec. 14 at 7:00 PM

Decide 22-year-old case, Ongpin urges court

By Philip C. Tubeza

FORMER TRADE MINISTER ROBERTO V. Ongpin has asked the Sandiganbayan to resolve a 22-year-old forfeiture case against him for allegedly misusing ill-gotten wealth from the operations of the so-called Bacuit Connection.

In a motion he filed on Dec. 8, Ongpin and the anti-graft court's Second Division should decide already whether or not the government had a basis to cause him as a defendant in Civil Case No. 0117 which was filed on July 24, 1987.

The initial complaint in the above-cited case was filed — more than twenty-two years ago. The plaintiff completed presentation of its evidence on Oct. 25, 2005, while defendant Roberto V. Ongpin concluded the presentation of his evidence on June 18, 2007," the motion said.

Government lawyers are seeking the forfeiture of P1.65 million in "unexplained assets" that Ongpin allegedly amassed during the regime of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, particularly during the four-year period the "Bacuit Central Bank" was in operation in the 1980s.

P51B in damages

They have also asked the Sandiganbayan to order the defendants in the case to pay at least P51 billion in damages.

Aside from Ongpin, the other defendants are the estate of Marcos, his widow Imelda R. Marcos, former armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Fidel V. Ramos and Ver's children Irene, Pedro and Rene Ver, Helen Ver Turpon and Pedrito Ver Benavidez.

They were accused of illegally enriching themselves by taking millions of dollars from the local currency's market and cashing it off to various banks abroad.

Government lawyers alleged that in 1982, Ongpin and Ver, acting on Marcos' orders, assembled an illegal market money changers — identified as Jimmy Chua, Go Pek, Celdran Goo, Raffy Chua, Peter Ty, Basilio Belarmino, Go Lim and Wilson Chua — and organized them into the group that came to be known as the Bacuit Central Bank.

This became the site for the central bank of the Philippines through which most dollar transactions were passed.

Silva Gancayco, then a director of Equitable Banking Corp. and one of the defendants, reportedly provided banking facilities for the group's activities. Government lawyers described Gancayco as a "special friend" of Ver's.

In his defense, Ongpin said the prosecution had failed to submit any evidence to prove that it had a valid case against him.

PNB to appeal new US trial in Arelma case

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK (PNB) is set to appeal a US court ruling ordering a new trial to determine ownership of $35 million in ill-gotten Marcos wealth deposited with Merrill Lynch, according to a Presidential Commission on Good Government official.

PCGG Commissioner Ameurfina Herrera said the PNB will appeal the decision of New York State Supreme Court Justice Charles Ramos to hear the claim of Marcos human rights victims to the Arelma account in Merrill Lynch, while the PCGG studies whether or not to get formally involved in the case.

"The PNB will file a motion to appeal his [Ramos'] decision while the republic studies its legal options. We have many options here," said Herrera in an interview.

Pre-trial

Ramos set the pre-trial conference of the case for Dec. 15 but Herrera said that the PNB...edarb was named a respondent in the case together with Merrill Lynch and the Arelma Foundation...And until Dec. 17 to file an appeal.

PCGG Commissioner Nicasio Alcuaz said the agency was still consulting with its American lawyers on whether or not the Philippine government—through the PCGG...should get involved in the case.

"We are still studying this because our lawyers advised us that if we attend (the New York hearings), we would be legally entrapped," said Alcuaz in an interview.

"If we attend the hearing, we would be submitting to the jurisdiction of that court and casting away our sovereign immunity," he explained.

Sovereign immunity

Sovereign immunity refers to the legal doctrine that bars legal proceedings against a government without its consent.

The Philippine government in 2000 successfully used this doctrine to convince the US Supreme Court to reverse a lower court decision awarding the $35 million to the human rights victims of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

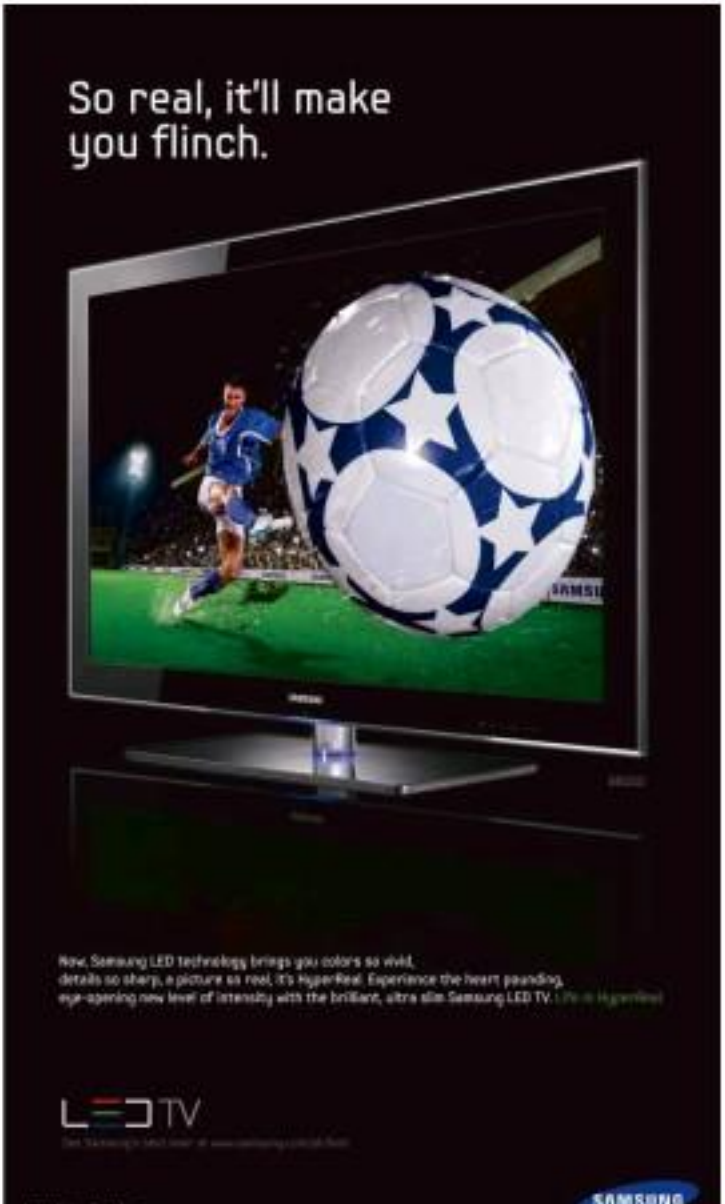
The US high court ruled that when a country asserts a claim to property in the US, and that claim is not frivolous, the dismissal of civil cases involving that property is appropriate when the country decides to assert its sovereign immunity and refuses to surrender the proceedings.

But last month Ramos ruled that the claim of the 10,000 human rights victims to the Arelma account should again be heard in court. He said the US high court ruling was issued in a different context and, while it was "informative," the decision was "not binding on New York courts."

"Should (the Philippine government) continue to elect not to participate, all other parties to this proceeding should not be barred in doing a resolution as to the disposition of this property ... Despite the Republic's absence, an effective judgment may be rendered," he said.

The $35-million Arelma account grew from $2 million that was first deposited with Merrill, Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Inc. in New York in 1972.

Arelma Inc. is a Panamanian corporation believed to have been one of the dummy companies used by Marcos to hide ill-gotten gains.



'Sloppy' police work impairs probe, say critics

MAGUINDANAO, MAGUINDANAO – Amid the political chaos that followed the November 23 massacre of 57 people, including 30 journalists, in Ampatuan town, police investigators have been criticized for their "sloppy" handling of the crime scene.

Critics say the failure to properly secure the area and collect evidence has hampered efforts to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

Police officials have defended their actions, saying they were overwhelmed by the sheer number of victims and the need to act quickly to prevent further violence.

But legal experts say the mishandling of the crime scene could have serious consequences for the prosecution of those responsible for the killings.

"The chain of custody is broken when evidence is not properly collected and preserved," said Atty. Jose Manuel Diokno, a human rights lawyer. "This could allow the defense to argue that the evidence was tampered with or planted."

Police have also been criticized for their handling of the media. Reporters were initially barred from entering the crime scene, and some were detained for several hours after they tried to enter.

The Philippine National Police has launched an internal investigation into the matter, but critics say it is not enough. They are calling for an independent probe by the Commission on Human Rights.

The massacre has sparked outrage and condemnation from around the world. It has also raised questions about the role of the Ampatuan family, which has been accused of orchestrating the killings.

The family, which controls the local government, has denied any involvement in the massacre.

The investigation is ongoing, and police say they are working to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

Ampatuan car collection awes soldiers: 'What an arrogant display of wealth!'

From page A1

LACK of OXYGEN can KILL!
OXYGEN
0920-9610-322
www.jarenamed.ph

océ COPIER SALE
Tel: 7427763 • 7129187

GMC lemon truck, two Toyota Hi-Lux pickup trucks, a Ford F150, an Isuzu D-Max, a Toyota Hi-Ace van and two military trucks.

Several flatbed trucks could also be seen in an adjacent parking area.

The raiding team did not check on the vehicles as these were not included in the mission order issued by Lt. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer, the martial law administrator in the province.

The discovery of the expensive vehicles came amid reports that the powerful Ampatuan clan had amassed exceptional wealth a decade after ruling over a province considered among the country's poorest provinces.

The searchers found underneath a heap of dried corn stalks a digital camera and a laptop bag containing documents, including a prison order for Datu Ampatuan Jr.

A search in a nearby mansion of his looks yielded a .50-cal. machine gun, a .30-cal. submachine gun, ammunition for the firearms and several camouflage uniforms for police and paramilitary personnel.

Two other .50-cal. sniper rifles, guns, a .45-cal. pistol and over 1,100 rounds for .50-cal. machine guns were also recovered from a heap of dried coconut husks.

Searchers had gone to the mansion twice before but failed to find any weapons.

Tip prompted raid

Tension mounted, tardy gripped the searchers and threatened to stop the ranking team.

"This is the third time that I saw this mansion under this [illegal]," Ofilena told reporters. "The martial law only covers warrantless arrests, not warrantless search and seizure," he insisted.

Pedro maintained that the raid, prompted by "a very reliable intelligence information," was authorized under the martial law provision issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo on Dec. 4.

Ferrer, who will succeed the operation, said their forces have yet to account for over

TRAVELING IN STYLE Also found inside an alleged Ampatuan warehouse in Shariff Aguak are an SUV with Plate No. GDV-888 and a bus complete with bedroom and toilet. Ayo Cornelio

BIOWELL
BUY 1 TAKE 1 PROMO
Avail our
Please contact
Tel: 913-5234, 913-5614 G/C
0920-9184-86 Manila

FAME
Electric Shaver Model
from Brazil
the biggest sale in the world
Please contact
Tels.: 913-5234, 913-5614 G/C
0920-9184-86 Manila

₱54-M in cocaine found in Davao

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—AUTHORITIES found eight kilos of high-grade cocaine worth almost ₱54 million Wednesday night in the airport in the base district, local police disclosed yesterday.

"It scares me.... This is the first time to see something like this," Mayor Rodrigo Duterte said, apparently referring to the sheer volume of the shipment.

Supt. Alden Delos Santos police chief, said the drugs were discovered inside a trolley machine of two container vans inside the Maersk container yard.

One of the vans arrived from Pakistan on Nov. 18 and passed through Malaysia before reaching this city. The other van came from India on Dec. 1 and also passed through Malaysia, police said.

Senior Supt. Ramon Apolinario, city police chief, said laboratory tests confirmed the powder substance, which was found in eight packs weighing about a kilo each, was cocaine.

The Davao dubbed the cache was intended for Davao and agreed with Apolinario that the drugs may have been intended for distribution in other countries.

"This is a transshipment," Apolinario said in Filipino.

Duterte said the drugs would be immediately burned.

"I would like to know where the cops were heading," the mayor said. "This is for the rich, because this is intended for export. Other destinations, not Davao, were in the Philippines. We could be wrong, but such this volume, this is not for Davao."

1,000 firearms issued to paramilitary forces of the Ampatuans.

Also yesterday, members of Civilian Volunteer Organizations (CVOs) in two towns voluntarily turned in their firearms as military aircraft continued to drop leaflets, issued in chaos by the local government.

In Datu Hoffer, 31 militiamen agreed to be placed under custody of the local police after they surrendered their rifles, issued in chaos by the local government.

In Datu Piang, 31 paramilitary members handed in 30 rifles to the 72nd Infantry Battalion.

Ferrer said the seized firearms would be subjected to ballistic tests to determine if they were used in the massacre.

On Wednesday, police tagged 180 government militiamen as among 561 suspects in the Philippines' seven political elections.

Of the militiamen identified, only two of them is currently—Ismael Ramain and Tahjan Dilon.

The remainder of the newly named murder suspects are members of the Ampatuan clan or are police, military and local officials working for the Ampatuans. Several dozen have been arrested.

Witnesses to carnage have identified Andal Ampatuan Jr., a scion of the clan, as leader of a group of gunwielding militiamen who tracked a rival's convoy in Ampatuan town-ship, officials said. The dead included 30 journalists and their staff.

3 moved to General Santos

Three more members of the Ampatuan family were moved to the custody of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) in General Santos City following their arrest on Saturday in Shariff Aguak.

They were acting Maguindanao Gov. Sajid Ampatuan and Vice Gov. Akhmad Ampatuan and Shariff Aguak Mayor Anwar Ampatuan. They joined their brother, Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao at the CIDG jail.

In Manila, officials tightened security at the Quezon City branch of Investigation following intelligence information that supporters were out "to extract" Ampatuan Jr. here for detention quarters. He is facing multiple murder for the massacre.

On Tuesday night, police discovered guns and a grenade inside an abandoned vehicle a few blocks away from the NBI. "We're not taking it lightly" said NBI spokesperson Ricardo Diaz.

Monitoring Manila mansions

Several supporters of the Ampatuan clan in Metro Manila are also being monitored closely by the National Capital Region Police Office to ensure that they will not be used as hideouts or storage places for firearms and ammunition, said NCRPO Director Roberto Rosales. With reports from Tina G. Santos and Allison M. Lopez in Manila and Agullo Zonia, Angel Ivy Mallen, Charlie C. Inbaan and Rose May V. de Guzman, Inquirer Mindanao

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
INVITATION TO BID

Palace: GMA too busy to attend historic session

From page A1

sha had many other things to do, Malacañang said yesterday.

Ms Arroyo spent Wednesday attending a series of activities in Bulacan and Pampanga, where she is running in the second congressional district in the May elections. In Bamban, Pampanga, she signed a House bill converting a college into a state university.

"She is a busy person. She has a full schedule. She should not begrudge her the right to prioritize the use of her time so that every minute is spent in the service of the Filipino the duties of her office," Gary Olivar, one of Ms Arroyo's spokespersons, told reporters.

Sorry, no entertainment

Lawmakers had questioned Ms Arroyo's absence in the joint session of the Senate and the House of Representatives on Presidential Proclamation No. 1959, which placed Maguindanao under military rule.

"The President's schedule is not there to make it fit for the President to make," Olivar said.

He argued that Ms Arroyo did not have to personally show up at the National Press Club because she had already submitted a written report on martial law and had sent key government officials to explain the matter to lawmakers.

"Perhaps it should remain contentious a more entertaining scenario, this fact that she was not there," Olivar said. "But unfortunately, (her presence) is not required by the Constitution."

Absence not crucial

Olivar said lawmakers should now turn to on Ms Arroyo's report and the explanations given—and still to be given—by the government's executive branch officials, led by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, on Proclamation No. 1959.

"I fail to see how her non-appearance diminishes the substantive value of the report she has already sent to Congress," he said.

"If they have a problem with the quality of information that has been given to them in writing—as was supported by testimonies given in person by the relevant members of her official family—they should focus on it, instead of whether she's there."

Olivar said the Palace was generally satisfied with how the joint session was conducted on Wednesday.

"It's a good start and let's keep it up," he said. "I would like to have more civility."

Greatest care

Olivar made it clear that Ms Arroyo found no "pleasure" in placing an entire province under martial rule.

"I don't think anybody will be comfortable declaring martial law. Including like that, to declare only after a full counsel, appropriate amount of deliberations, and with the greatest amount of care," he said.

"We hope for a successful conclusion to this inquiry—the filing of charges, the meeting out of the cases, or punishment, the restoration of full peace and order, perhaps the beginning of the dismantling of private armies and the embrace of private armies."

Olivar added: "Maybe a good thing can come out of this bad thing."

Teachers hail hike in poll pay

By Philip C. Tubeza

A MILITANT TEACHERS group yesterday hailed the Commission on Elections (Comelec) decision to raise the honorarium of teachers serving in the May 2010 elections.

The Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) lauded Comelec Commissioner Gregorio Larrazabal's statement that public school teachers can expect a "bigger and better honoraria package" consisting of honoraria, transportation allowance, free health support, and medical assistance.

Larrazabal added that the honorarium could be higher than the P6,000 received by teachers in the 2007 elections. Around 400,000 teachers are expected to earn P6,000 each in next year's elections.

"This is certainly a positive development... Previously, Comelec had always stated that there are no funds available for additional honoraria," Antonio Tinio, ACT national chair, told Inquirer.net.

MERCURY HOMES
Free Installation!

idec
Split Type Wall Mounted Aircon
1hp-P16,500
INVERTER SERIES
FREE INSTALLATION

CITYLAND
We commit, we deliver.
NEW
MAKATI EXECUTIVE TOWER IV
P 10,978 monthly
813-2222 567-3333
487-3333 243-1212
www.CITYLAND.net
SITE

People's Choice
GOLD 2008
GOLD 2007
GOLD 2006
GOLD 2005
PLATINUM 2004
GOLD 2003
GOLD 2002
GOLD 2001
GOLD 2000
GOLD 1999
GOLD

VIREN
9wing-P35,000
Free Installation!

BIG SALE!
COPYTRADE

DRAGON FIREWORKS
FREE DELIVERY
AGENTS & DEALERS ACCEPTED
0% INSTALLMENT

Have the contour that's right for you.
SLIM WAIST BELT
ABDOMINAL BINDER
PREGNANCY SUPPORT BELT
PERSONA™
your personal support aid
mercury drug

PILOT
SUPER MARKER
PILOT
SUPER COLOR MARKER
FINE
SCA-B
SCA-F
Available in:
black, red, blue brown, violet, green, orange, yellow
COSMOS BAZAR, INC.
571 Q. Paredes St., Binondo, Manila
P.O. Box 1697 Tels.: 242-4871 to 74 Fax: 242-4871
PILOT CORPORATION

Merry Christmas Offer! Most Complete Line of High Pressure Washer & Vacuum Cleaner on the Best Prices!
P3,700
P29,500
CLEANCITY COMMERCIAL INC.

Orientique
Furniture & Carpets
Christmas Sale
Everything 50% OFF
INDIA * INDONESIA * CHINA * PERSIA

Roca
THE LEADING GLOBAL BATHROOM BRAND
Europe's No. 1 selling brand!
Bathroom Lifestyle Combo Package Offer!
the home depot
Living in Style

need a job?
LOG ON TO
www.jobmarketonline.com

CAGAYAN II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The CAGAYAN II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CAGELCO II) is inviting all interested contractors to pre-qualify and to bid for the **SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF MATERIALS, CONSTRUCTION, and COMMISSIONING** of a **10MVA POWER SUB-STATION** to be located at **Tangatan, Sta. Ana**, based on **IEC/PEA Standard of Thailand**.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures. Interested bidders shall comply with Accreditation Requirements (for submission to the Accreditation Committee Chairman, Clarence E. Jacinto) as follows:

a. Company Profile
b. Business Registration
c. Business Permit
d. BIR/VAT Certificate
e. Latest Income Tax Return (ITR)
f. List of Clients for a period of three (3) years
g. Financial Statements

And must be able to pay **Php40,000.00** (for this particular bidding only and not refundable) for bid documents during the pre-bid conference.

Schedule of activities are as follows:

BIDDING SCHEDULE	
Release of Invitation to Bid (two publications)	December 04 & 11, 2009
Issue to Accredited Bidders	December 14, 2009
Pre-bid Conference	December 21 (10), 2009
Pre-Bid Conference	January 08, 2010
Conduct of Public Bidding	January 15, 2010

CAGELCO II reserves the right to reject any/or all bid without any reason, waive any formality therein, accept proposal most advantageous to the Cooperative and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidder for expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) GABRIEL A. TORRESILLAS
General Manager

Tucson
OMNIPOTENT
Tucson
HYUNDAI

ISSN 0115-2542 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Vol. 25 No. 3

OPINION

Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/opinion

Vol. 25 No. 3 FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2009

Troubling

THE 1987 CONSTITUTION IS A POST-MARCOS document, that is to say, the framers installed safeguards based on bitter lessons learned during the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. They did not reckon, however, with the danger posed by a supine Congress. But who could blame them? It is difficult to imagine, a mere generation after the ouster of the Marcoses ended the dark days of military rule, that we would be served by a Congress that is completely indifferent to the imposition of martial law.

EDITORIAL

At first, Speaker Prospero Nograles, himself a bemedalled lawyer during those same dark days, befriended the very idea of a joint session of Congress to consider the revocation of Proclamation 1959. The joint session is called only to revoke a proclamation of martial law; Nograles asserted. Why convoke it when the majority of congressmen are already in favor of the proclamation?

The notion that calling a joint session within 48 hours of the declaration of martial law was an express order of the Constitution, one of those post-Marcos safeguards meant to guard against the abuse of the Chief Executive's commander-in-chief powers, did not seem to cross the former human rights lawyer's mind. At least until better lawyers advised him otherwise.

Then, the fourth highest official of the land sought to portray the preparations for the historic joint session as a game of protocol, a race for privileges, between the House of Representatives and the much-smaller Senate. The rules the two chambers agreed upon last Monday Nograles seemed to treat like a mere set of drafted conclusions.

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, the martial law administrator under Marcos, struck much the same, urgency-less tone. He quibbled, for instance, about the definition of the 48-hour period. Did the Constitution contemplate the inclusion of Sundays? We found this an unusual position to take. In the first place, it is a well-settled principle that where the Constitution does not distinguish, lawyers should not add, or multiply, distinctions. Secondly, the issue is material loss and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus—a matter of the gravest importance. Should Congress take its time ascertaining the factual basis for the imposition of martial law in Maguindanao simply because the people of the province are strangers, continuents by mere sufferance, in the eyes of some senators or congressmen? We wonder whether Enrile would have acted with greater alacrity if martial law had been imposed in his beloved Cagayan Valley.

Finally, both Enrile and Nograles set a schedule for the joint session that can fairly and accurately be described as leisurely. In their schedule, deliberations on the martial law proclamation can last until Dec. 15. Where, the public wants to know, is the sense of urgency that the constitutional issue demands?

Even the valid question raised by Congress' penurring guilty, Magsaysaysian Rep. Edcngara Dilangalen, Enrile says fit to answer peremptorily. Where was President Macapagal-Arroyo? Shouldn't she at least give Congress the courtesy of showing up at the joint session, to make her constitutional mandated report?

No, Enrile said. No need—thus ruining the history-shaping opportunity to set the bar high for the exercise of the President's martial law power. Indeed, this is the troubling thing about the run-up to and the actual conduct of the joint session: Where our honorable legislators faced a choice between the most stringent standards and mere pseudo ta., they settled, each time, for the low and worthless.

Instead of demanding the President's presence, they retreated the executive secretary and a coterie of other officials. Instead of demanding the presence of the defense secretary, they settled for a lame excuse and a mere undersecretary. And instead of demanding more urgency from themselves, they made do with a schedule that brings us right up to Sinibang Gabi.

What, to borrow the browning phrase, are they waiting for, Chairman?

Publisher **Isaac Tanny**

Editor in Chief/Chief Executive Officer **Jeremy Mercado**

Managing Editor **Joe Ma. D. Nolasco**

Associate Editor **Benjamin G. Blanco**

Assistant Editor for Readership **Rosario C. Bonoan**

Opinion Editor **Juan V. Mesa**

News Editor **Antonio T. Enriquez Jr.** • Chief, Page One Operations **Nelly R. Pichay**

Chief, News Desk Unit **Ruben D. Almario**

Executive Editor **Florentino H. Floro Jr.**

Senior Desk Editor **Jose F. Sonido III**

Editor at Consultant **Alexander Remollino**

Chief Photographer **Ernie L. Sarmiento**

Art & Design Director **Ismet A. Vicarme**

Board of Directors **Isaac R. Tanny**

President **Alexander Poeto-Romualdez**

Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing **Ramon C. Romero**

Vice President for Advertising **Pilar R. Olaguer**

Vice President for Info Tech and Ops. **Gary G. Lim**

Vice President for Finance **Jose H. Valencia**

Advertising Circulation **Manuel Andres R. Francisco**

AVP for Marketing **Jennifer L. Reynoso**

Corporate Affairs Manager **Edward R. Malasaga**

All rights reserved. Except as permitted by law, no copies of the Philippine Daily Inquirer may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Cartoons, comic strips and 'komiks'

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

IF YOU STILL DO NOT KNOW WHAT GIRLIE-man gibs is give to your friends and relatives, here is a suggestion. Get a copy of the beautiful coffee-table book, "The First 100 Years of Philippine Komiks and Cartoons," published by Visprint Inc/Visline Inc. Put in the first comprehensive compilation of Philippine komiks and cartoons, and some strips dating back to the precise point when the first comic strips were published by the venerable magazines of the Roces/Avesco Publications.

For this, we have to thank Sidney Simson, head honcho of Simson Associates, son of erstwhile painter Hugo Simson, Jr., and president of the Sandaang Kastanyas ng Pilipinas. He was able to get copies of old and rare comic strips which are reproduced, in color and in black and white, in the book.

The main writer of the book is Dr. John A. Lent of Temple University, a comics scholar. Simson noticed him when he wrote an article, "The First Seventy-Five Years of Philippine Comics," which appeared in the UP magazine, The Comics Journal. Simson asked Lent to expand it for a coffee table book. The result is the book I am writing about.

Aside from the very old cartoons, the book has many interesting information. For example, do you know that among our earliest cartoonists was Jose Flash? Also among the early comic strip artists were Fernando Amorsolo, Vicente Manansala and Carlos V. Francisco, all now National Artists for painting. The book has samples of their early comic strips.

And do you know that the early comic strips and komiks were copied from American materials? For the addiction of readers, cartoons, comic strips and komiks are different. Samples of cartoons are the editorial cartoons in the opinion section of newspapers; comic strips are those published regularly in the comics page of the entertainment section; komiks are the serialized stories in romance and komiks magazines, comics spelled in Filipino.)

Some comics aficionados claim that our early comic strips were modeled after American comic characters. Author after Dagwood of "Blondie." Lakas Maniakal after Popeye. Butterfly at Gabay after Mutt and Jeff. Robots and Rapido after Tarzan, and Dyip at Bilog from "Bringing Up Father."

Among contemporary comics characters, everybody can see that Darna, the most popular and enduring of Filipino comics characters, was modeled after Wonder Woman. The act of uttering the words "Kamat" and "Darna" that comes from the heroine from one or the other was an adaptation of "Shazam" which transforms Billy Batson into Captain Marvel and back to Billy Batson. Darna has been made into a series of motion pictures and television adaptations, and so has Kamat. If sharply contrasted, from Rosa del Rosario to Vilma Santos and Marian Rivera, have been thought-provoking.

According to the book, Darna was first known as "Varga." designed and first drawn by the author himself. Nestor Redondo in Liwayway Bulalakaw Magazine in 1947. Redondo was a good storyteller but not a good artist, however. Later he did not take off until another artist, the young Nestor Redondo, "gave flesh to what would become an enduring cultural icon, making Darna into powerful and graceful lines that would be emulated by other artists for decades. Although Darna looks very much like Wonder Woman, Redondo insisted she was modeled after Superman and "Kan has the powers of flight, super strength, and invulnerability."

Darna was so popular as a weekly "Darna Comics" was published "until the Redondo family withdrew its permission for it."

After disappearing for almost 50 years, Darna was revived in 2002 by Mango Comics which came out with a green full-color series. Written by Sidney Simson and drawn by Ryan Onrubia, Ian Medina and Gilbert Monsanto, the launching was given the works in publicity. Darna became a kinder-gentler television series on GMA Network which broke all TV ratings and made Angel Locsin and Bvera popular.

Another endearing comics character of Redondo is "Dyesebel," which is inspired by many old stories of mermaids. The name was adapted from the biblical name Jezebel. Other characters by Redondo were "Buralyong" and "Sabre sa" which were made into top-grossing movies.

Another comics author who is a better story teller than illustrator is Carlos J. Caparas, author of the "Pandoy" Bandolero (komik) popular by actor Fernando Poe Jr. who made four Fpj movies. Rosa Rosella and Juggers Bataan made one each. It was made into a television series in 2005 and 2006.

In the PEP "Pandays" section, it is interesting to note, said the book, that "it was another prolific komiks novelist who wrote the scripts—Pablo S. Gomez, the man who gave Caparas his first break via his (PSG) Publishing."

Caparas was a former night watchman "who subsided away the boring hours by drawing and writing komik stories. Caparas, like Redondo, however, was a better storyteller than illustrator. His most popular creations were drawn by somebody else. So that when Caparas was made National Artist for Visual Arts, there was an uproar. Fellow komiks creator and artist Crispin Maniquiz Jr. launched an online protest. Caparas cannot be a National Artist for Visual Arts, Maniquiz said, because he did not illustrate his komiks creations.

Anyway, some of the best komiks novelists and illustrators are Francisco Coching, Pura Santillan Castro, Severo Inductivo, Alfredo Alcala, Fred Carillo, Alex Nino, Pablo S. Gomez, Nonoy Marcelo, Pedrito Reyes Jardiel, Jesse Santos, Mario Marvin and many more.

(The best editorial cartoonists and comic strip contributors in another column.)

A bizarre Human Rights Day

Passion for Reason

Raul C. Pangalangan

YESTERDAY, WE MARKED HUMAN RIGHTS day under the shadow of martial law—for the first time in 25 years at least, if we count from Ferdinand Marcos' formal lifting of martial law in 1981 after he pronounced amendments that nullified into the Constitution the patchwork of emergency powers he had exercised since he seized all powers that dark night in September 1972.

The bizarre editorial aptly called martial law "the last taboo" in our post-Marcos democracy—and we've got to hand it to President Macapagal-Arroyo to time its breaking to straddle the global celebration of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Supreme Court Justice (now retired) Teresita V. Mendoza said that "the power to declare martial law poses the most severe threat to civil liberties. It is a strong medicine which should not be resorted to lightly."

In Randolf David v. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the Supreme Court called martial law the "least benign" in the "taxonomy of graduated powers" available against threats to national security. The sequence begins; as the beings said, with the "calling-out" power (i.e., to call out the Armed Forces), then escalates to the power to suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, and then concludes with the power to declare martial law.

In another case, Chief Justice Reynato Puno said that the commander in chief claims "unprecedented, with enormous" the "well-crafted powers of the President" but which "can only be used to quell the rebellion." The Court, when it dealt with GMA's claim of necessary powers after the Oakwood mutiny, emphasized that the rebellion be actual and not just imminent—so as to use the most conservative, "in the offing."

Why then has President Arroyo resorted lightly to this bitter medicine? By now you must have heard the many possible explanations, all of them underlining of her proclaimed mandate. The most persuasive seems is that it is all a scheme to let the Ampatuans off the hook: either for them to be cleared of the charges, or at least to be released on bail, or to have their penalty reduced.

The last legal scenario unfolds thus: The Ampatuans now stand charged with some 57 counts of murder, by adding rebellion into the brew: one, the lawyer unless the last, because there now seems to be enough evidence for murder, but adding rebellion does not merely require a new information. Rebellion is a crime as first explained by professor Harry Stonecipher, director of the UP's Human Rights Institute and Arroyo's legal counsel, the charge of rebellion will conclude other crimes, which are then merely absorbed into the rebellious charge (as detective Gregg specu-nabbed for a truly monthly intelligence and warrior, the poet Amado Hernandez). If the Court finds that there was no rebellion, so then set the stage for letting the Ampatuans go scot free. Truly "amatory" as Sen. Rodolfo Biazon says, because it basically manipulates the judiciary as an instrument of manipulation of forces in sabotaging our democracy.

The other scenario is that Arroyo is merely testing the waters to find out how far she can go. This precisely was what Marcos did in 1971. The suspension of the writ of habeas corpus after the Plaza Miranda bombing—and the unanimous Supreme Court decision validating it in Lansang v. Garcia—is now viewed as merely the dress rehearsal for the 1972 proclamation of martial law.

Perhaps GMA's goal is merely to muddle the issue and create political confusion, since it will have the civil libertarians into the same side, even temporarily and uncomfortably with the Ampatuans. Already there are disingenuous interpretations that will lower the threshold requirement for "rebellion." The argument goes: the "rebellion" requirement in conventional law under the commander-in-chief clause is different from the very strict requirement in imposition a rebel in criminal law. The self-acknowledged "mastic (i name for GMA) is partly her martial law powers. Yet the fancy hedgehog is all for tonight, because GMA's own Proclamation 1959 already adopts the same strict definition under criminal law and cites Republic Act 6986—the anti-coup d'etat law.

The Inquirer editorial on the 37th anniversary 1959 claims that "the local judicial system is not functioning, thus endangering public safety." Supreme Court spokesman Jose Midas Marquez has categorically denied the claim. While not judicially binding upon the SC justices, he gives no concrete facts that belie GMA's claim of a failure of the local judicial system. While it was true that judges in the area were taking precautions to ensure their safety, he said, they never stopped performing their duties.

He gave concrete examples of a functioning judiciary. The raid of the Ampatuan mansion that yielded the cache of high-powered, government-issue firearms was made under a search warrant issued by Shalgaraan Regional Trial Court Judge Francis Jalosjos Jr. The bail petition of Akmad Ampatuan Jr. of Datu Unsay who has been charged with murder was also hots set for hearing by Judge Nicholas Cuervo of the Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat, Regional Trial Court. As for the transfer of venue from Cotabato to Manila, the Supreme Court has promptly heard the matters.

GMA has not demonstrably manipulated the law and, in so doing, has to manipulate the institutions that it actually feels sensitive urges things legally as if the other side truly believed in laws and constitutions, reminding us of the philosopher's metaphor about "high priests who know that the gods do not exist but keep their jobs." The high priestess has kept her job, for sure, but I doubt if it came with the rest had any faith to lose.

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

Martial law immobilized Ampatuans

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE GOVERNMENT GAVE INDICATIONS (LEFTEDit Ed) it is nothing to stamp domestic and international opinion to declare martial law in Maguindanao.

As martial law rule went into its seventh day, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said on Wednesday that it would only be lifted once it had "accomplished its objectives" of restoring peace and order in Maguindanao.

"There are several objectives needed to be attained when martial law was declared," Ermita said. "If we find that we have attained those objectives, it does not mean that we consider lifting it," added when those objectives were, Ermita was evasive, saying "it would not be to undermine point and order and security in the area and ensure the safety of the citizenry."

Ermita's statement heightened public fears that the government planned to maintain martial law indefinitely, although he insisted that it would observe the 60-day period allowed by the Constitution. According to the Constitution, the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus or the declaration of martial law shall be good only for 60 days and "it must be demanded by or required by public safety."

President Macapagal-Arroyo complied with the provision that she submit a report to Congress within 48 hours of the declaration. As a safeguard against the indefinite extension of martial law, the Constitution empowers Congress to extend the 60-day period "if the invasion or rebellion shall persist and public safety requires it." The Constitution also says it is Congress that shall "determine the length of the extension."

Congress is holding a joint session to vote on a proposal to either revoke or support the presidential action. It has been cited there in debate, and the declaration of calling it separately later to revoke the proclamation appears this either the vote is taken possible today.

A resolution filed by the Liberal Party in the House of Representatives asked for the revocation of Proclamation 1959, arguing that if "there are rebellion and multiple murders. One clan leader, Datu Ampatuan Jr., who had surrendered to the authorities, is being held at the National Bureau of Investigation in Manila, facing 25 counts of murder. He is the prime suspect in the massacre.

In each incident on the compounds of the family in Maguindanao were found the heavy and high-powered weapons and ammunitions, including missiles and armored vehicles, enough to equip an army of 3,000 to 4,000 men.

The declaration of these weapons is being used by the government to back up the claim that a rebellion has taken place. The claim is disputed by a number of lawyers who point out that there was no formal basis for the martial law proclamation since there was no actual rebellion in existence. Former Senate President Jovito Salonga argues that nowhere in Proclamation 1959 was the "immediate, imminent fact of rebellion proven or even alleged." He said that the "establishment of positions to assist government troops by heavily armed groups does not automatically amount to overt hostility."

Against the background of these legal issues, it becomes more reasonable that the martial law declaration, which authorized warrantless arrests and raids on the compounds of the Ampatuans for weapons seized, has accomplished the objectives of arresting the members of the clan holding provincial and municipal positions, threatening their power as a political machine and neutralizing their private armies. The crackdown on and the disbandment of the private army have, as a consequence, emboldened witnesses to come forward and give information about where the arms were hidden as well as evidence to back its charges against clan members, as well as those who helped in the massacre.

Whether or not the government has a strong case of rebellion or of murder is a legal issue, but it is quite clear that martial law has enabled the government to immobilize the Ampatuans and weaken their ability to commit violence.

A 'positive spin' on government

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE AWARDEE of this year's Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM), but especially Mar-Ia Ambrosette Marasigan, awardee for human resource development, who, as the executive director of the Career Executive Service Board (CESB).

It may be odd to cite Chat Thaworn may be among the more obscure TOYM laureates, including volunteer Elmer Jay Canon-Ampuan and awardee for marine biologist Eliseo Lucero Fernandez. The others are high achievers, especially broadcaster Noli Eduardo Reyes, human rights expert Leah Lizarondo, and former Bataan reporter and environmental champion for press freedom and human rights Ricky Alamayo.

But Marasigan's selection is relative anonymity in that the public is not too aware about the CESB, which provides training and career development for the bottom rungs of civil service. The CESB also monitors career service officers or CSOs who, through the years, have managed to pass government exams to attain and protect civil service political status.

I have known Thaworn for quite some time, even if since we part on an overseas trip where this topic entered the Department of Health, where she received the Presidential Management Staff (PMS) graduation from the UP College of Law. She kept me abreast of her career movement, all within the halls of the bureaucracy, from the Department of Interior to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), where she was Undersecretary for two years, some months ago, that I was named by the CESB to sit on the board of jurors for the "Gawad CESB," a search for outstanding career service officers who rendered their years in government not merely with competence and integrity, but with innovation, integrity and courage. It was one of the more enjoyable tasks I have been handed in the past year, maybe because much of what we are exposed to as journalists is the "bad news" when it comes to government and those who serve in it. It was refreshing, to say the least, to be exposed to the other side of government service, to hear of individuals who have served the country with dedication and dedication.

THE "GAWAD CESB" awards were handed out last month in Malacañang, and among those cited was Gumersindo Lucero who received a posthumous award since he was killed in an ambush earlier this year. Lucero was regional director for Region 2 and was the undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture and he had just testified on the "fertilizer scam" which embroiled former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocjoc Bolante. Pilloth has yet given to show that a conspiracy to silence him by ruthlessly eliminated votes from a search that seeks to put a positive spin on government service. This, even if Lucero was cited for a posthumous by introduced by the Bible, and not for his connection to the scandal or the subsequent.

Salvador Enan, a regional director of the National Statistics Office, was cited for his efforts at being closer to the grassroots the services of the NSO, which is often the only national agency that people in the provinces deal with regularly. Ellis Barugay, a department manager of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, I remember from among the short list of cash dates because one of her accomplishments was to organize a choir of PCSO wards, children with learning and psychological disabilities, who are often overlooked and neglected by government agencies.

Congratulations also to the other awardees, Governor Dan Fernandez of the DENR, Marco Montes of the BFAD, Senador Ramos of the NeDA, and Evelyn Tesoquelo of the DILG, for their examplary records and for working to go beyond "business as usual" in their pursuit of excellence in government service.

HERE'S the continuing bad news about local governments—Mandaluyong being just one awful example—the Ruling Party Senatorial is recently recognized 1 official government units this year with excellence for maintaining local government programs. The recognition, to be officially confirmed by not-in EDA list this year's national selection committee, chaired by professor Edna Bonacol, opted to recognize five of nine entries in program.

The five winners in the local governments are from Mindanao, two are from the Visayas and seven from Luzon. The winning programs range from peace and conflict resolution to environmental management to health and social services. Each program received a cash prize of P500,000 and government units from the winners for their programs.

Among the winners in the local governments are Sultan Kudarat, Cagayan de Oro, Cebu City, Marikina City, Taguig City, Quezon City, Bayombong City, Santiago, Isabela, Cauayan, Makati City, Mandaluyong City, Pas

GMA's defining legacy

LETTERS

THE UNSEEMLY JARGE WITH her of institution among the victims of the Maguindanao massacre was off-balance, bordering about the future of democracy in the country in its impression of dismemberment of government which appear to have been exacerbated under the Arroyo regime.

What was the immediate reaction of the commander in chief? She sent a tip-toeing political emissary to beg the Ampatuans to submit to investigations, and even declared a national day of mourning. Viewed as we bridle a response to the savagery and scale of the savage amid strong condemnation of the mass murder by the local and international community, those moves were followed by a declaration of a state of emergency in Maguindanao. But aside by the military yielded the unexpected, threatened from the Ampatuan clan who were weighty enough to stage a high-tech war. Out of gunsmoke popped none, not what is damning was the discovery that economic bonds of governance—particularly in the defense department—were involved in the Ampatuans' unsavoury dealings.

Embarrassed, perhaps, and alarmed that more incriminating evidence might crop up, President Macapagal-Arroyo declared martial law in Maguindanao. Whether Proclamation 1959 is an honest response as a public outcry or an attempt to cover up hidden deals hewn in the lamparans' services dismiss will be the subject of debates.

Fortunately for this country, we have a hearth issues, the body and soul of human expression that has shown courage in stand by the side of the people when their rights are threatened, instead of being cowed by the capitalistic domination of its media. Philippine media have remained a bastion of hope for the helpless and the aggrieved.

Idolatrously however, its being seen as a protective shield has made media people the logical target of the real enemies of the State. Considered thorns in their pursuit of power and happiness, fearless journalists, led by the Arroyos, their Arroyos in Congress and hordes of adjutants in both national and local levels have made media workers an endangered species, a situation which has become a concern and an embarrassment to Filipinos here and abroad.

The current political calisthenics, being orchestrated and generously engineered by government resources, has grown overrated fangs sucking blood and emasculating our regulatory institutions. Even the Supreme Court, which many of us cast our last refuge—has shown inevitability to political pressures. In its latest decision, it legitimized grant for power and encouraged opportunists in the use of government resources to perpetuate themselves in office, in effect justifying President Arroyo's run for Congress while sitting as president.

Hopefully, the Arroyo regime succeeds in delivering credible justice to the victims of the Maguindanao massacre without undermining that America Otcovenant, that gory scene—the slaughter in defiance of law and order as well as civilized behavior—will be remembered as GMA's defining legacy to the Filipino people.

—ATTY. W. ONG JONG,
UPAO Union Square Condominium,
142 12th Avenue,
Cubao, Quezon City

Sexual assault used as 'war tactic'

THE CASE OF THE FIVE WOMEN victims of the Maguindanao massacre who were found to have been raped only proves that sexual abuse was "war tactic" in killing and terrorizing women.

It appears that the continued issues of paramilitary and private armies sanctioned and instructed by politico-warlords and manned by the local Philippine National Police were brought to the forefront of public and in the case, government officials and their relatives participated directly in violating the women who were eventually killed.

The sexual molestation and other forms of violence inflicted on the women, clearly, were attacks on their inherent worth and human dignity as women.

In both Islam and Christian faiths, women are regarded with deep respect and honor. Notably, both denounce gender injustice.

It is certain that the fate of the women victims of the worst Maguindanao massacre illustrated how women double suffer in situations of conflict. They were nonmilitant supporters only in opposition mostly for sake of a specific area.

Women from all walks of lives, here and abroad, are challenged for their sense of duty to stand up and speak out about the injustices perpetrated against women, let us, women, respond to this challenge in a show of solidarity.

—MARY LOURDES CUEPPO, R.S.C.J.,
SOS, SEPA,
vice chair, Women Studies and Resource Center-SHE Inc.,
co-coordinator Pioneers and Children Committee,
DIPLAC-Dialogue Committee of Dalmacia Network of Professionals

Non-profit firms not covered by RA 9257

THIS IS IN REACTION TO RAMON J. HERnandez's column titled "Making Country Club assets fight back," (Inquirer, 11/23/09).

We write in behalf of our clients, Mahong Country Club Inc.

It must be emphasized that the writer cannot distinguish between the non-profit from the government. In his earlier letter the private condominiums concerned in granting close discounts, a substantial part of the income of these establishments is taken by the government in the form of taxes. Exemption of members of any entity is a resistant to the international safeguards against the unlawful taking of property without just compensation, the government grants these private establishments the right to claim those discounts as tax deductions from their corporate income tax. This is precisely the reason differ in the case Commissioner of Internal Revenue vs. Central Luzon Drug Corp.(416 SCRA 414, 440 (2003)), Republic Act 9257 has no application to non-profit private clubs based on exclusive memberships such as Mahong Country Club Inc. (MCCI), which are exempt from the payment of corporate income tax. If these clubs are exempt by law from paying income tax, then they cannot also be DOnations.

It is interesting to note that as mentioned only the Sept. 3, 2009 issue of Social Welfare Undersecretary Alicia R. Bala of the National Coordinating and Monitoring Board (NCMB), in a subsequent letter, dated Nov. 6, 2009, also opined by Undersecretary Bala, the NCMB cannot see anything from the Securities and Exchange Commission corrected itself and concurred with our position. The latest status, in part: "The NCMB legal service, upon verification with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) that members of the Associations of Social Drafts Clubs (SOFC) are natural non-profit stock corporations, gave due consideration to their position making exemption from RA 9257's coverage as non-profit stock corporations based on earlier membership."

We hope we have enlightened Inquirer readers on our position.

—MARIA ALEXANDRA (ALEXIA) Eng.,
for the Firm, M.A. Aguinaldo & Associates,
618 Amorsolo St., Makati, Manila

Rebellion may be way out for clan, says Gordon

From page A1

the province on Nov. 23 because of warrantless arrests and detentions.

Gordon said Congress' endorsement of President Macapagal-Arroyo's Jan. 19 04 would provide the perpetrators of the massacre with a way to escape the heaviest penalty for murder by embracing the rebellion charges.

Rebellion charges carry lighter penalties, he noted.

"They are criminals but if we caught them, they would claim to be rebels. If there was cause of rebellion they would have been charged with 57 counts of murder, 57 counts of illegal possession of firearms," he said.

Gordon said the government might be letting others get away with the worst crimes and the most penalty by claiming that the suspensions were engaged in rebellion.

"The scope of martial law is surveying, and if this issue gets buried over time, they can be pardoned for their rebellion," Gordon said.

Presidente Mangagad-Arroyo last Friday placed Maguindanao under military rule and has up to 60 days after the outbreak of the powerful Ampatuan clan allegedly threatened an attack if its leaders were arrested for the massacre.

Since martial law was imposed, more than 60 people have been rounded up, including five clan leaders who have since been charged with rebellion.

Datu Unsay Mayor Andal Ampatuan Jr., prime suspect in the massacre, is already in jail and charged with 25 counts of murder even before martial law was imposed on Dec. 4.

"Aren't we making a mistake? ... (If it is a lawyer) I'm sure that if we declare martial law is valid, and the suspension of habeas corpus is valid, and even if we charge them with multiple murders, Mayor Ampatuan and his lawyer will say Congress has declared martial law is valid, therefore, we are rebels," Gordon said.

"And because we are rebels, you can only charge us with rebellion," the senator said.

SUBJECT: ARMED SUSPECTS — Government forces seize more explosives and weapons and ammunition on Thursday from another Ampatuan residence in Shariff Aguak town in Maguindanao.

Passes to be free

Gordon said that despite the murders, there seems to be plenty of private and illegal possession of firearms. Mayor Ampatuan could only be charged with nebulous purposes and his allies, exclusive temporal.

Rebellion purposes carries a jail term of 20 to 40 years, said exclusive temporal, from 17 to 30 years.

"We are giving him passes to be free," Gordon said.

Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera, one of the resource persons in the joint session, said murder could not be absorbed by the crime of rebellion.

Government prosecutors have already filed separately murder and rebellion charges whose applicable and rebellion charges if the evidence warrants, according to the justice secretary.

Gordon said that while that might have been the government's intent, it would not stop Ampatuan lawyers from using it as a defense.

Illegal searches

Senators Alan Peter Cayetano and Francis Pangilinan noted that the executive justified by the martial law submitted that the government, through police and military troops, could search without warrants.

"There are warrantless searches, which are not warrantless or illegal searches, but they (government officials) are saying that as long as there is a state of martial law in that area, they can search anything," Cayetano said in an interview.

Interviewed after the interpellation, Cayetano said that if the officials continued to pursue that doctrine and make searches, they may seemingly or unwittingly be helping the Ampatuans and thwarting about their case.

Cayetano said warrantless obtained through illegal searches could not be used as evidence.

Bungling the case

Taking the floor, Pangilinan said that the right to the warrantless searches and seizures conducted by the police and military after the declaration of martial law were contrary to law.

"The government is bungling the case. The evidence seized illegally cannot be used against (the Ampatuans). Nowhere in the Constitution does it say that the right against illegal searches and seizure is suspended," he said.

Martial law does not suspend the Bill of Rights, Pangilinan said.

For her part, Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago said the martial law declaration had no legal basis.

Santiago noted the absence of an armed rebellion and ideological motivators in the run up against the government.

She also said that public safety was not endangered by the "crimes committed by the warlords."

In an unexpected move, an avid supporter of predecessor Jose Gerardo Aquino came out to defend Salilayan's role in Maguindanao and to appeal to everybody to leave it alone until it has served its purpose.

Abdulah Bay, Teodoro Lorenzo, Aquino's speech writer and press secretary, was the first to state the irony of him defending a martial law proclamation.

He said the leaders and the undisciplined firearms "cry out for the most extreme exercise of the police power, which is nothing less than martial law."

"Yesterday and as an ardent voice has martial law been better justified on based more sufficiently on incontrovertible facts," Lorenzo said.

"We are seeing Maguindanao and what we see, unless we are totally blind, cries out for martial law ... at least for now," he added.

Actual, not imminent

On the floor, Santiago explained that the framers of the 1987 Constitution envisioned actual, not imminent rebellion. Until yesterday, she said there was no media footage or pictures of two groups "shooting at each other."

"The Constitution imposes two conditions for martial law: there should be a state of actual rebellion and public necessity requires it. These conditions do not exist today," she said.

"I know, I foolishly submit this general test for constitutional martial law: Is martial law a necessity for the existence of the state? The answer is 'No.' I further submit this particular test: Is there an actual rebellion, and does public safety require martial law? Again, the answer is 'No.'"

Santiago said the penal code defines the crime of rebellion as "rising publicly and taking arms against the government for the purpose of removing from the allegiance to said government or its laws."

In other words, she said rebellion was an open, organized and armed resistance to established government.

Fatal flaw

Santiago pointed out that PP 1959 did not even claim that there was a state of actual rebellion raised, she said, "was a fatal flaw."

She said the proclamation's claim of "heavily armed groups in the province of Maguindanao have established positions to resist government troops" was not a constitutional impediment to the conservation.

Santiago also reminded Sen. Gaborro affirmation that rebellion was a political offense, not a common crime and, thus, carried a lighter penalty than murder.

She said the essence of a rebellion was "ideological motivation," and since it was absent there was no rebellion in the first place.

She later explained in reporters that the Ampatuans were neither "communists nor fascist" but mere warlords. "I say again, there is no rebellion," she told her colleagues.

The second condition warranting martial law is that "public safety requires it," she said.

"Not crimes committed by warlords against each other are basically threats to the safety only of their respective camps," Santiago said, suggesting that "when they committed are not threats to public safety per se, but acts of vengeance."

She said when two groups were quarreling, "they are not danger to public safety but they are violence to each other."

Obstructive authorities

Loonie, the first member of the house to speak at yesterday's joint session, said there was rebellion in Maguindanao to justify martial law but it was not the kind of rebellion as defined by the revised Penal Code.

"I submit that rebellion here is not an inchoate reference to a particular provision of a particular law, but to a wide yet reasonable, general but not indiscriminate attention to a state of affairs that has drawn near beyond lawless violence, beyond a state of insurgency, to an imminent upheaval to discharge properly the functions of civil government in the area, by all all people, the duty constituted but now obstructive authorities thereon," he said.

Ideology has not been a component of rebellion since the commission of the unintentional from the 1930s.

Loonie cited the refusal to obey govern. ment commands, the usurpation of government offices and the use of these offices to protect the suspects in the massacre in Maguindanao as basis for the proclamation.

Anson's
YOU AND TECHNOLOGY
HoliDaily Savings!
Whirlpool
Pioneer
APPLIANCE EXTRAVAGANZA!
GET A CHANCE TO WIN ANY OF OUR 120 MAJOR AND MINOR APPLIANCE PRIZES!
Anson's
VISIT ANSON'S BRANCHES AT:
MAKATI
ALABANG
ORTIGAS
QUEZON CITY
MANILA
FOR CORPORATE NEEDS
MAKATI
ORTIGAS
FOR YOUR SERVICE NEEDS

Metrobank

ABENSON

SHOP NOW PAY IN 2010

Abenson Exclusive!

Pay Next Year using your **Metrobank Credit Card!**

Promo period is from December 1 to 31, 2009
Per DTI NCR Permit no. 5574, Series of 2009

81.29cm (32") LCD TV
PANASONIC TH-L32C10X
₱2,241.66 /mo. for 12 mos.

81.29cm (32") LCD TV
LG 32LH20R
₱2,333.17 /mo. for 12 mos.

81.29cm (32") LCD TV
SHARP LC-32A37
₱2,450.83 /mo. for 12 mos.

101.6cm (40") LCD TV
SONY KLV-40S550
₱6,999.91 /mo. for 12 mos.

106.68cm (42") LCD TV
LG 42LH20R
₱4,000.17 /mo. for 12 mos.

*Shop Now Pay in 2010 is valid on Metrobank locally issued Credit Card. To avail of the promo, a minimum purchase of ₱15,000 in a single charge slip on 0% installment for 3,6 or 12 months is required. 0% is valid provided monthly bill is paid in full. 0% installment is subject to bank's approval. Refer to flyers for the full mechanics.

Keep using your Metrobank Credit Card!
Call 8-700-700 (Metro Manila)
or 1-800-1-888-5775 (Domestic Toll-Free)

Metrobank
You're in good hands.

RP human rights situation getting worse, says CHR chief

By Hilda Dizon

AS THE WORLD MARKED INternational Human Rights Day yesterday, Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Chair Leila de Lima said the Nov. 23 Maguindanao massacre had turned the spotlight on the worsening shutdown under President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration. She claimed, "... could notably be recognized by the dark days of Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship."

More brutal

"We cannot say it's worse today than martial law, but the situation is similar in its gravity events. We were supposed to have already restored democracy, but the very things are happening, it is said that we are making faded-duty duties or ... a faded democracy," De Lima said.

De Lima said the "unbelievable incidence of atrocities" like the massacre of 57 people including women and journalists is not only inside the human rights situation in the country "dismal" but also showed a much more brutal nature of the crimes that outlasted even atrocity victims.

"The Arroyo administration is reaching an apex when compared with the record of the [Marcos] regime. In terms of nature, a massacre like this did not happen before," she said.

In its journal report, the human rights group Karapatan said in the first nine months of the Arroyo administration, there were 1,118 documented extrajudicial killings, 304 victims of forced disappearances and 1,028 victims of torture.

As American historian said there were more than 1,000 extrajudicial killings during the 20-year Marcos dictatorship.

'Never again'

De Lima said it was "ironic" that the 61st anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights was commemorated while the nation was grappling with the massacre in Maguindanao and its resurgence in, like the Ampatuan of martial law days.

"Yesterday the CHR led the planting of 57 trees to symbolize the call for justice for the 57 victims of the massacre.

"It's the mass killing to take place as a result of killing. Dec. 23, they also exhibited the so-called mass Human Rights Day, it's a travesty," De Lima said in warnings.

She said the perpetration of the massacre should be held accountable. "We cannot allow these wrongdoers to evade justice, this time. The rule of law must be strengthened. The importance of forensic evidence must be recognized. We have forensic science is too many stories, where the prosecution responsible are never found. We have seen too many cases but, for lack of proper evidence, the accused allow free to take place once again, in Maguindanao, like this time, and not even again."

Hong Kong

Filipino workers in Hong Kong marked International Human Rights Day with a protest action.

Members of the United Filipinos (UnIFil) in Hong Kong and Migrante Hong Kong gathered the Philippine Consulate and called for justice for the massacre victims as well as the lifting of martial law in Maguindanao.

"Martial law will not spell justice for the massacre victims but will result in more human rights abuses against the Maguindanao people," UnIFil coordinator Eman Villatuya said in a statement.

Gabriela-HK chair Cynthia Maloto-Tellez said the imposition of martial law in the province might end up in "a whitewash" and "bad to the Ampatuans occupying their real justice."

Middle East

From Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Migrante-Middle East regional coordinator Jake Lavarez Mendoza said the group's Muslim members "condemn the killing in Maguindanao and need concrete effort martial law would lead to more rights abuse.

Meanwhile, said Filipino workers in the Middle East—where public demonstrations are illegal—also worried that if the Arroyo administration could not give justice to the massacre victims, then it would not have the moral ascendancy to seek amnesty for some 2,000 Filipinos languishing in prisons in the region.

He said almost two-thirds of the Filipinos in Middle Eastern jails were thumped only with minor offenses involving violations of labor laws, contract issues and matrimony laws.

"We can't expect that OFWs will be given protection by the Arroyo regime that is just to liable for violating a culture of impunity in the homeland manifested in widespread extrajudicial killings and disappearances, and heightened political persecution of leaders and members of peoples' organizations," he said. With a report from Jeannine Jaymg

Abu Sayyaf beheads hostage; college VP kidnapped in Basilan

From page A1

cadaver," Sahidullah said, adding that journal spokesman were going on.

The new kidnapping occurred some 24 hours after the arrested head of Marquez Singson was executed by Pinata Pandi, also in Isabela, officials said.

Singson, said to be in his 20s, was beheaded by he abductors or captors purportedly because of his employer's failure to pay a ransom demanded of P1.5 million.

Sahidullah said Singson was in a three-wheeled motorcycle that was in a big plastic bag, and that policemen crossing the plane initially thought it was a bomb.

When bomb experts inspected the bag, he said, "they were all surprised to discover a man's head."

Only on Nov. 9, the severed head of bishop Cirilo Almario Caramoan was found in Jolo. Gunmen were the chief leader of Kidnap Movement behead in Dec. shot in Jolo.

Singson, 38, his lord Tan and Oscar La Tan, all of the Highrock Woodcraft Corp. factory in Mahaw, Basilan, were kidnapped on Nov. 11.

Barangay officials ignored factory owner George Tan in saying that the kidnappers—suppose ly belonging to the group of Furaji Indama, a leader of the Abu Sayyaf leader group in Basilan—were demanding a P10-million ransom.

According to a report by Agence France-Presse, Michael Tan is the son in-law of George Tan, who police said had ignored three warnings not to cooperate with the Abu Sayyaf.

Sahidullah said Singson was beheaded because Tan failed to pay the initial ransom demand of P1.5 million.

But a member of George Tan's staff said there had been no ransom demand.

"We don't know, there was a ransom demand, but no actual communication," said the staff member who asked not to be named.

Lucky to be employed

The severed head has been taken to a funeral home, where Edith Singson identified it as her brother's.

"Only seconds ago do such has been set," she told the Inquirer.

Edith Singson said her brother is married with the High Tech physical factory to support his wife and adopted child in Isabela.

"He came here to look for work and he brought he who help to be employed by the boss," she said.

Brig. Gen. Eugenio Clemens, commander of the 1st Mechanized Brigade, said troops had been dispatched to find Singson daughter's body.

Supt. Abdulakar Tahirim, the Basilan police chief, said police, army and soldiers had stepped up their search for the Abu Sayyaf kidnappers.

"The latest beheading is their trail, but whenever we arrive at the site where they were last reported, they are already gone," he said.

Tahirim said the other two hostages—Michael Tan, 27, and Oscar La Tan, 61—were learned to be alive as of Wednesday because there were allowed to call their employers there.

He said the Abu Sayyaf made contact with the factory owner on Saturday to relay the ransom demand and gave him two days to pay up, but that the latter failed to raise the money on time.

"They turned George Tan to pick up Singson's severed head and [the] caskets] night," Tahirim said.

Martial law

Marquez Singson's late has moved Basilan Bishop Martin Jumoad to call for the imposition of martial law in the province.

"I have no problem with martial law. In fact, I am calling on President Macapagal-Arroyo to declare martial law here. There is no other way to stop violence in our province, why not?" he said.

Jumoad has long been calling for tougher police and military response in dealing with kidnappings, which he said "have become a big business."

Chief Supt. Arturo Wilkin said the gunmen involved in yesterday's kidnapping were members of the same who had been detained and turned to hostility and extortion, targeting cattle and logging companies in agusan del Sur and nearby provinces.

Bandits, communist guerrillas and Moro rebels operate in Mindanao. In addition private Ad local bandits-notorious have private armies and feuding warring clans is common.

Data vitally vote also at the end of last month's Maguindanao carnage.

Studies funded by the Asia Foundation and the UN Agency for International Development found there had been more than 1,200 clan feuds in Mindanao since 1970, killing nearly 5,000 people and displacing tens of thousands. With reports from AP Reuters and AFP

Gunmen abduct 75 people in Agusan del Sur; 16 freed, 2 escape

From page A1

to an organized crime group.

The men were armed with M-14 and M-16 rifles and several shotguns, police said.

Two hostages who were among those taken hostage escaped during the 8th December 8 capture and in the hands of the Feril group, according to Bajao, head of operations of the Lianga police.

The gunmen appeared to be among the hostages in human shields, Vice Gov. Dominga Cane Jr. told The Associated Press by telephone.

The hostages were taken from Sitio Mahayon, Barangay San Marlin, in Prosperidad town, 200 kilometers southeast of Davao City and 800 kilometers of Maguindanao where the Arroyo administration is trying to resolve another crisis involving the massacre of 57 people allegedly by members of the Ampatuan clan and their followers.

None of the Prosperidad hostages have been banned, police said. But the hostages were hungry as some had not had breakfast or lunch, according to the police.

Bajao said policemen had gone to Prosperidad to secure Feril and his men with a view of arrest them the group—numbering 15—seized the hostages at around 8 a.m.

'This is clear war'

The gunmen rounded up villagers, teachers and students so they was in school and gathered them at the village hall before marching them up a hill 3 km away where they were being held, Bajao said.

"This is part of a clan war. There is a standing warrant of arrest for Cado Feril and his group, who were tagged behind the killing of his neighbor's husband," Bajao said.

He said Feril was a suspect in the killing of the family of Jun Talley, with whom, he has a long-standing dispute.

May Shiekel Ampatuan Jr., spokesperson of the Army's 4th Infantry Division, said the provincial government had decided to pursue the hostage.

"But both parties did not appear in all the attempts by the government for them to settle their differences," Ampatuan said.

Crime gang

Instead of establishing for the killings, Tubao filed a case against Feril.

"Feril and his group took hostage civilians in the area so that the warrant of arrest will not be served on them," Bajao said.

During the operations yesterday, Palaro said Rivas Bernardino the dismissed of the soldier dangers ignored him said his group.

Agusan del Sur Gov. Edwin Ecleo Plaso has sent a civilian negotiators to convince Feril to release his other hostages.

The two teachers who escaped were identified by police in Manilen, Gregorio and Nida Alimodoro.

Prosperidad police chief interviewed on ABC, identified by the news channel as PO2 Ana Rose Estrellado, said that with the release of the students, there were no longer any children among the remaining hostages.

Gunmen's demands

The hostages still in the hands of the gunmen included two brothers from Cantilan Industrial and Development Corp., as well as a fertilizer operation, a school teacher and several other civilians, according to the police.

Pajaro said that in exchange for releasing some hostages, the gunmen demanded firefighter, cigarettes, the presence of journalists on the site and the withdrawal of combat-ready troops from the area.

They also asked for the arrest of Tubao, the leader of Bois civil group, and for the police and the military to stop their operations against the Feril group, Pajaro said.

He said police must had ensured that the demands were not taking any action against the gunmen to allow the negotiations to proceed.

"We are not even shooting us," he said. "As long as the negotiations is continuing, no police operations will be done."

Clear wars

The Mindanaoan started two administrations, i.e. Gen. Raymundo Penera, to deploy the Army battalion near the hostages "to help ensure the hostages."

"We're only playing a support role there," Penera said.

Chief Supt. Arturo Wilkin said the gunmen involved in yesterday's kidnapping were members of the same who had been detained and turned to hostility and extortion, targeting cattle and logging companies in agusan del Sur and nearby provinces.

Bandits, communist guerrillas and Moro rebels operate in Mindanao. In addition private Ad local bandits-notorious have private armies and feuding warring clans is common.

Data vitally vote also at the end of last month's Maguindanao carnage.

Studies funded by the Asia Foundation and the UN Agency for International Development found there had been more than 1,200 clan feuds in Mindanao since 1970, killing nearly 5,000 people and displacing tens of thousands. With reports from AP Reuters and AFP

US study: Ultra-clean kids prone to adult ills

From page A1

in life, according to a US study that observed the health and homes of Filipino subjects.

"Our research suggests that ultra-clean, ultra-hygiene environments early in life may contribute to higher levels of inflammation as an adult, which in turn increases risks for a wide range of diseases," including cardiovascular disease, said Thomas McDade, lead author of the study.

Researchers at Northwestern University in Illinois looked at data from a study in the Philippines, which followed participants from birth to 22 years of age.

The study sought to better understand how childhood environments affect parts of a person that increases when there is inflammation—a sign the body may be susceptible infection or injury.

Mothers in Cebu

The data were compiled by tracking children born in the 1980s in 3,327 Filipino mothers found in urban and rural areas of Cebu province.

Researchers found the children every two months for the first two years of their lives and then opened one the visits to every four or five years until the kids reached their 20s. Data collection ended in 1983, with the most recent current conducted in 2005.

Among the items that the researchers assessed were the hygiene of the children's household environment—whether domestic animals such as pigs and dogs roamed freely"—and their families' socioeconomic status.

Blood tests taken when the study participants reached adulthood showed that although Filipinos suffer no more infection diseases as infants and toddlers than other countries, they have lower levels of C-reactive protein (CRP) when they reached adulthood were at least 80 percent lower than in American.

Filipinos as those early 20s had average CRP concentrations of 0.2 milligrams per liter, compared to the 2.0 milligrams the group had. Most concentrations of the protein of 1–3 milligrams per liter.

Unexpected findings

"CRP concentrations are incredibly low in Filipinos compared to people in the United States and Europe, and that's what a lot of people would have anticipated because we know that Filipinos have higher exposure to infectious diseases," McDade told Agence France Presse.

One finding of the study published in the online edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences was that high-CRP levels—indicating more inflammation—were exposed to less natural focus in the home in kids.

But that should not serve as an impetus to reach out and buy a pig to have roaming around the house, McDade said, adding that household environment with hygiene would probably take that out anyway.

Barbey, he said, the message to take home from the study is the importance of being exposed early in life to common microbes and bacteria.

"These bacteria and microbes may actually in outright classical disease but they do play an important role in promoting the development of regulatory mechanisms," said McDade, who is an associate professor of anthropology at Northwestern and a fellow at the university's Institute for Policy Research.

'Pick it up and eat it'

To explain the importance of exposure to such microbes, McDade, who has a two-and-a-half-year-old son, likened immune system development to the way humans promote brain development in infants and toddlers by exposing them to "all kinds of cognitive and social stimuli."

"We encourage our children early in life and those are lots of neurological connections being formed, and you need to engage with your environment in order to prompt those connections," he said.

"The immune system also needs engagement with its environment to drive its development, and without that you're not setting it up, you're depriving it of a necessary source of information that it needs to promote its development," McDade said.

And with his nine child, McDade said he ignored the two-second rule when food would drop on the floor.

"I don't hesitate—I tell him to pick it up and eat it," he said.

AFP

₱7-B cash gift approved for gov't employees

From page A1

ber, administrative aide at the Office of the Press Secretary.

The cash gift will cover permanent, casual and contractual employees and the amount will come from several items in the national budget, according to Andaya.

He said the national government was shouldering the ₱7,000 for every employee, while government agencies would have the option to add ₱5,000 from their own coffers.

"We looked for items in the budgets of departments in every city. We've been doing that every year," he said.

In October, the Department of Budget and Management gave government employees, selectively affected by powerful storms, the option to avoid furnishes of the second installment of the yearend bonus a month ahead of its release.

The second installment was released on Nov. 13. ₱3 Bargaining

A10 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER DECEMBER 11, 2009

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Across the NATION

Nationwide cry in media rallies: 'Stop killings'

THE DAY THAT journalists worldwide marked for remembering 30 media men murdered in Maguindanao passed with protest rallies nationwide and tension in Pampanga, where policemen guarding President Macapagal-Arroyo made sure no protester got near her.

MEDIA *over ghost candles on the site where 57 people, including at least 30 journalists, were murdered on Nov. 23, the single worst act of violence against journalists in the Philippines.* AFP/CNN

At least 40 policemen blocked 30 journalists in Angeles City, where Ms Arroyo opened a new chapel on Wednesday.

The Pampanga journalists, members of various media groups in the province, held a picket to join the observances of the "Globe of Day of Solidarity against the Maguindanao Massacre" called by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).

At least 30 journalists were among the 57 murdered on Nov. 23 in a Maguindanao town named after the Ampatuan clan.

30 flowers, candles

At the massacre site, a dozen journalists took time off to plant candles on red white bodies of their 30 murdered colleagues were dug up.

The journalists brought 30 white roses and the same number of candles.

A candle had a different color from the rest. It was pink and Bitas offered for reporter Reynaldo Momay who was believed to be among those murdered but whose body hasn't been found.

In the worker's Mindanao cities of Davao, Tacurong and Pagadian, several media stations carried an emotional appeal by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines for public support for protection for journalists.

The stations followed the airing of the appeal with a moment of silence.

"Filipino journalists need to hear our voices expressing solidarity with the victims and anger at the Philippine government that allowed this to happen," read a statement from Aidan White, IFJ secretary general.

Arroyo's record

In Angeles City journalists scored the impunity with which at least more than 100 cases of murders of media men were committed since Ms Arroyo came to power in 2001.

They timed the picket at 9:30 a.m., or about the time Ms Arroyo was at the Holy Angel University (HAU) for Mass led by the apostolic nuncio to the Philippines, Most Rev. Edward Joseph Adams.

Security was tight at the auditorium. Anyone inside was not allowed to leave until the event was finished.

Pampanga journalists marched from the Holy Rosary Parish where they attended Mass.

In his homily, Pampanga Auxiliary Bishop Pedro Virgilio David said: "This (Maguindanao massacre) is one piece of news that seems to have a longer shelf life than most other news because it hits the reporters really up close because we know what can happen the moment you and the rest of your colleagues fall silent."

3 forms of silence

"You can fall into any of the three forms of journalistic silence: One, the silence of the lambs; two, the silence of the Judases; and three, the silence of a volcano preparing to erupt," David said.

On the sidewalk across HAU, journalists held their ground while policemen stood less than two meters away. A truck of the police's Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT) blocked the way. All gates to the HAU were closed.

In Baguio City, members of the NUJP Baguio-Benguet chapter led a candle lighting ceremony at the Baguio Cathedral on Wednesday afternoon for their murdered colleagues in Maguindanao.

Members of various media, lawyers, students and women's rights groups took part in the ceremony.

Protestant and Muslim leaders joined to prayers.

A similar event was held by Bulacan journalists at the Bantayog del Pilar Heroes Park at the Bulacan State University in the City of Malolos also on Wednesday afternoon.

Barcoded vows

In Bacolod City, at least 100 journalists gathered at the Bonifacio Statue for a rally to demand swift justice for the murder victims. They wore black shirts with the words "Stop killing journalists."

Two of the 30 murdered journalists were from Negros Occidental — Bert Mayorilla of Bombo Radyo Bacolodand Henry Araneta of DXRI Cadiz. Reports from Rosario Orejas and Gerenda Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon; Rolando Sarabi and Desiree Cobias, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Carla P. Gomez and Jamiel Israel Sinap, Inquirer Visayas and Ryan D. Rosauro, Inquirer Mindanao

DOJ asked to reopen 2005 case on Aurora publisher's murder

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO— THE SISTER OF a newspaper publisher who was murdered in Aurora in 2005 has appealed to the Department of Justice to reopen the murder case because it has remained archived since January although the police have arrested one of the suspects in May.

Benita Mendoza was killed off the airport on Tuesday saying her son Jonathan, Philip Agustin, publisher and editor of Tinig Tinig Bayanihan, discovered justice.

"I wish the Christmas gift we get is justice," Mendoza said in a telephone interview on Sunday.

She also asked other media organizations to help and pick up their cases where the National Press Club has left off. She said the case has dragged on for five years, leaving her with very little money to file a petition for the case's reopening.

Senior Lacuna, the prosecutor in the case, did not reply to queries on the status of the case.

The Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR) said the case has been archived in the Regional Trial Court's branch 6 in Manila in January because two suspects have yet to be arrested and cannot be tried in court.

CMFR said the suspected mastermind, former Angadan Mayor Anne Marks, was dropped from the case and released from jail after Agustin's daughter, Rochelle Cruz, withdrew her complaint and entered into a settlement. Cruz could not be reached for comment.

CMFR reports said the police had trained over one of the suspects, Nilo "Boxer" Montes, in the usual following his arrest in Malolos, Pampanga, in May.

Agustin was shot dead in his daughter's home on May 18, 2005, hours after he delivered the May 2-8 special edition of his weekly paper. It featured stories on Thaffe's alleged mishandling of funds intended for victims of the landslides that killed some 700 people in Guinsaliban in 2004. Rosello Ovejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

Among Ed supporters start vigil on poll case

STAYING PUT
A man spends a lazy afternoon inside his house in Sharrif Aguak, Maguindanao, one of many residents who stayed put following the declaration of martial law in the province.

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Supporters of Pampanga Gov. Ed. G. Panlilio began on Thursday what many for months of preparing as to they await the outcome of the recount case filed by former Board Member Lilia Pineda over alleged poll fraud in 2007.

The vigils, held at the capitol grounds, are to "give comfort and prayer and peaceful actions so that the voice of women and truth shall prevail on the [Commission on Elections'] Second Division," said Irwin Manalo, spokesperson of the Kapampangan Kontra Dayaan.

"Our main message here is that we made changing [Fadrer] Ed win without shouting, burning votes or bullying anyone. We campaigned on goodwill... and faith in God," Manalo said before the vigils started with Mass by Fr. Ruel de los Santos.

Padaca lesson

Also on Thursday, Panlilio's lawyer, George Erwin Garcia, called as "lame and misinformation" a report that the poll body would issue a resolution on the recount case today (Friday, Dec. 11).

In separate interviews, Garcia and Panlilio's lawyer, Inno Bill Jones Jr., said they have not received a written or verbal notice on the date of the promulgation.

Comelec Chair Jose Melo said he would ratify the schedule with Members Perez. The commissioners did not answer calls on Thursday.

Garcia said he has no idea if Pineda had won the case. Panlilio beat Pineda by 1,147 votes in the 2007 race.

Garcia said regardless of the outcome, "whether we lose or win, we wanted that the process developments might [help] the case."

He was referring to how the Comelec Second Division decided in the recount cases that unseated Bulacan Gov. Joselito Mendoza and Isabela Gov. Grace Padaca, who, like Panlilio, are members of the Liberal Party.

Peaceful resistance

Panlilio said he will move an unfavorable ruling with "peaceful resistance."

"I shall assert the mandate given me because the crusade for good governance worked to bring that out. Since we I, a priest, with no money, machinery and a great economic hoax[?]" said Panlilio, who is seeking reelection against Pineda next year.

On Monday, about 500 religious leaders and members of groups supporting Panlilio picketed the provincial Comelec office, urging the poll body to expedite the ousting of their rivals.

They were white shirts and black arm bands, which they said represented the death of democracy in the province.

Bishop Ortiz, Pampanga Christian Ministers' Council Executive Director, said the protest was not aimed at stopping the recount.

"This is a conscience matter. We want to tell the Comelec that there are Kapampangans who are against the recount," Ortiz said.

—Tonette Orejas and Charlene Cayabyab, Inquirer Central Luzon

Aussie group helps Benguet get fresh start after 'Pepeng'

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE province's typhoon and landslide victims stand to benefit from another international humanitarian effort to give them a fresh start following the tragedy in October.

But this time, the Australia-based Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (PGPD) wanted to take a direct hand in the promotion of reproductive health among victims now living in different evacuation centers in the province.

"Children, pregnant women and lactating mothers, who are now considered evacuees, must be given particular attention," said Anne McEwen, a member of the Australian Parliament.

McEwen and Anne Singleton, Australian Reproductive Health Alliance chief executive officer and PGPD secretariat chair, relayed to Gov. Nestor Fongwan here on Wednesday their intentions to include Benguet in its bid to make reproductive health a vital component of disaster risk management programs.

Singleton said women's safety must be top priority.

"That's why even the layout of the evacuation centers must be well planned to protect the evacuees from possible sexual assault or abuse," she said.

The PGPD, a member of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, has funded projects in Mindanao.

Singleton said Benguet was included after the group learned of the province's huge losses caused by Typhoon "Pepeng" in October.

Landslides triggered by the typhoon killed more than 100 people in the province. Most of the deaths happened in this capital town where 77 people were buried by landslides in the community of Little Kilometer 10 Barangay Pugo. Another 20 died in Sitio Sayagan in Barangay Pelitikan.

McEwen and Singleton's team visited those communities on Wednesday.

The province is recording to 137 families (685 people) displaced by the slides and living in evacuation centers in different sites.

Most of them are staying in tents provided by Shelter Box based in the United Kingdom.

Cybel Aglinlo, Bendy Planning Organizations of the Philippines chief for Baguio and Benguet, said the PGPD would help improve Shelter Box's programs. Rebecca Cuevas, Inquirer Northern Luzon

A RESCUE worker uses bare hands on Dec. 10 to clear uprooted and fallen trees from Benguet, where victims and rescuers were ordered to leave base buried alive.

SCORING CHATTER Gov. Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro shakes hands with youth delegates in the Lingap ng Kabataan program at the People's Gym in Tagaytay City on Dec. 8.

Gloria in Pampanga: As president or candidate?

GUAGUA, PAMPANGA—PRESIDENT Macapagal Arroyo returned to her home province of Pampanga on Wednesday, a week after filing her certificate of candidacy to represent the province's second district in Congress.

The President visited three towns and a city, which belong to three different districts, for various engagements. But with her political plans now known to the public, her visit elicited muted reactions from some Pampanga residents.

After her earlier engagements in Angeles City and Bacolor, Ms Arroyo proceeded to this town in her home district in Sampaloc the Guagua section of the ongoing widening of the Gapan-San Fernando-Olongapo (GSO) Road.

The project crosses a 20-km, four-lane road that is expected to ease congestion along the highway. The government has earmarked ₱22.39 million from the Road Economic Development Corporation Fund (REDCF) to finance the project.

President or bet?

Alberto Mabul, a farmer, said he sensed distinguish between Ms Arroyo the president and Ms Arroyo the candidate.

"I don't understand now her political politics," Mabul said.

Still, Mabul is thankful that Ms Arroyo has poured infrastructure and other projects to Congress.

That confident Lorenzo Domingo and Joselito Galang believed Ms Arroyo came here as part of her job as president.

"It's not yet election period so, I think her visit was [part of her job as] president of the country," Domingo said.

"Maybe she wants to see [the progress of] the projects she gave to the province, so she decided to visit us," Galang said.

Ms Arroyo's visit to Guagua was officially her first to the second district as a candidate. She ended speculations about her political plans when she filed her CoC on Dec. 1.

Curing 'kabalen'

Ms Arroyo had visited the second district at least 50 times this year, fueling speculations that she would seek a seat in Congress after her term ends next year by these visits. Ms Arroyo opened or inspected roads, school buildings and water systems, and delivered health services, land titles and scholarship grants.

Pampanga Rep. Aurelio Gonzales Jr. (third district), however, dismissed talks that Ms Arroyo was engaging in early campaigning in her district.

"[Her visit] is an truly caring kabalen (province mate) president who happens to come from the second district. She will always be a Kapampangan president and nobody can, and should not, take that identity from her," Gonzales said.

"This is a national project so, it is just right for the President to go here and inaugurate a portion of the road," Mayor Ronnie Rivera said.

Rep. Agapito Guanzon (third party-list) said the road widening is a long-term project of his sectors. "She wants to finish all the projects she installed before her term ends," he said.

But for Aduana Enrique, the Liberal Party's candidate for representative in the second district, Ms Arroyo's visit is tantamount to campaigning.

He said Ms Arroyo was using her position to wage an early campaign. Rosette Orejas and Charlene Cayabyab, Inquirer Central Luzon

Cagayan execs declare full backing for Teodoro

By Melvin Gascon and Willamor Visaya
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LAGAYAN GOV. ALVARO ANTONIO said he and the province's mayors would support the bid of former Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr. to become the country's next president.

"My brothers of Lakas-Kampi-CMD, we have already committed to help Secretary Teodoro in his presidential bid, long before he even filed his candidacy," Antonio told the reporters in a telephone interview on Wednesday.

The show of support was reaffirmed by Cagayan officials when Teodoro visited Tuguegarao City on Tuesday to mark guest during the birthday celebration of Mayor Delfin Ting.

"We are confident that the support will be a big boost for Teodoro, as Lakas-Kampi-CMD is the force to reckon with in Cagayan, the fact that eight of our candidates for mayor in the province are running unopposed," Antonio said.

Former Tuguegarao City Mayor Randolph Ting, the administration party's candidate in the congressional race in the first district, and incumbent Mayor Ting assured Teodoro of their support.

"We would campaign for him as we believe in his principles and platforms of government. He has the best qualification to lead the country for six years starting 2010," former Mayor Ting said.

In a press release quoting him, Antonio said Teodoro was the only candidate "having the only credible platform of governance."

The camp of Teodoro, the release said, was on its way to getting the full backing of the so-called "Solid North" after key figures in Isabela and Ilocos Norte earlier threw their support for the 43-year-old lawyer's candidacy.

The influential Dy clan of Isabela and Ilocos Norte officials, led by the province's governor, Michael Keon, earlier gave commitments to support Teodoro.

SMART

Text YES to 211

P100/5days from 10pm - 5pm the next day

Text PLUS100 to 6401

Or get Smartalk Plus load at your favorite retail outlets now.
From 5:01 PM - 9:59 PM, P2.50/min. for calls, P0.20/text

Available on SMART Buddy

www.smart.com.ph

Aplus METRO
Gino Abalardo S. Ulanday

BAYANI FERNANDO TELLS NEW MMDA HEAD:

'Study ban on clearing drive'

By Lolo B. Saberorta and Allison W. Lopez

FORMER METROPOLITAN MANILA Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday asked his successor to think twice before scrapping programs he had implemented at the agency, especially the campaign to clear sidewalks of obstructions, including ambulant vendors.

FERNANDO

Earlier the agency's new chair, retired Judge Tomas Torres, announced a moratorium on the crackdown against sidewalk vendors "for the sport of the season."

Torres, however, said the drive would resume next month as he also wanted vendors to stay on the sidewalk and keep off the streets to avoid causing traffic.

Fernando's sidewalk clearing operations had incurred the ire of urban poor groups, who accused the MMDA of violating their rights. It even led to violent clashes between sidewalk vendors and MMDA personnel, resulting in several deaths on both sides and leaving scores others injured.

According to Fernando, the projects he had implemented during his nine years at the helm of the MMDA were the products of extensive study and observation.

Sacrifices

"I hope he [Torres] would study well [his decision] because what we started might be waived like the sidewalk vending [drive]. You know, the MMDA has sacrificed a lot for that program. MMDEM even died to resolve that problem. So I hope he would think twice about that matter," he said at the Sutra Farms in Quezon City.

Fernando added that because of the agency's clearing operations, pedestrians had become more aware that they, and not vendors, should occupy sidewalks.

He stressed that if the program was stopped, this might lead to the return to the streets of vendors and other obstructions.

At the same time, it would also make them bolder about violating the law. Fernando warned, adding that if you give them vendors an inch, they might grab a mile.

"If you allow them to operate during Christmas, every day would be Christmas. The song was right. [Their campaign] needs to be sustained and backed with determination. A vendor would be reluctant at first to go on the road, but if he gets used to it, he would

TO PART A24

DID YOU KNOW

THE CENTRAL Bank Autonomous Region had the highest number of fatalities due to storms "Ondoy" and "Pepeng," with 368 dead and 54 missing. Metro Manila was next, with 241 dead. Ondoy and Pepeng killed almost 1,000 persons.

CAYTA, BENGUET, INQUIRER RESEARCH

Barangay residents oppose condo project in Quezon City

By Julie M. Aurelio

RESIDENTS OF TWO BARANGAYS in Quezon City yesterday expressed their opposition to three 12-story condominium development in their area, saying this could worsen the traffic congestion in nearby major roads.

In a statement, homeowners in the barangays Bagong Lipunan ng Crame and Horseshoe asked Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. not to give a permit to the developer, saying the project would violate zoning rules.

Astrid Greenhills Residences is a three-building project, with each building measuring 12.8-hectares, Crame Barangay Chairman C. Rincon said in the barangay Bagong Lipunan ng Crame.

The residents, most of them belonging to 23 neighborhood associations, pointed out that the project of local developer Gold Assets and Land Warehouse Inc. went against the city's zoning ordinance.

The ordinance provides a height limit of seven stories for structures in a residential area.

A check with the Quezon City council revealed that a certificate of exemption to the development through Resolution No. EP-#528, series of 2009 was granted on May 4, 2009.

In the resolution introduced by Councilors Ricardo Belmonte Jr. and Eelvi Lagman Jr., the exemption was granted since there was no objection to the project from the barangay council of barangay Bagong Lipunan ng Crame, as well as from residents.

"The exemption resolution is null and void for lack of prior consultation, and was granted with no concern for the health, safety and welfare of the community," the statement read.

"We are asking the city council to recall or revoke the resolution, and for the mayor not to give the developer a building permit unless it conforms to the height requirements," said Tita Bernardo, a resident.

She added that the project could worsen the traffic congestion in nearby roads such as C. Bernardo, Examiner, Hernandez, Ekampusa and D'Banzos.

A public hearing was held on Nov. 18 by city planning and development officer Dominador Castañeda Jr. with the barangay hall.

The residents, however, claimed Belmonte and barangay captain Teresa Jardin did not attend the hearing.

"We view the grant of the exemption as a dangerous precedent that will eventually transform our residential community into a commercial zone," the statement added.

MMDA tells LRTA: Clear Edsa or else

By Allison W. Lopez

AFTER RECEIVING NUMEROUS complaints from the public, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) yesterday asked the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) to remove obstructions on Edsa or face penalties.

MMDA Chair Oscar Inocencio told LRTA officials that trucks, concrete mixers and other equipment being used for the LRT north extension project from North avenue to Caloocan City were causing heavy traffic on the busy thoroughfare, especially in the mornings.

He pointed out that the ongoing construction work, particularly from Roosevelt to Balintawak, had been drawing complaints from motorists.

"This has to be corrected. The LRTA, commuters must finish their jobs on time because if not, we will have to do our job. Let's be done on this. I don't want anybody to go against our people or I will see to it," Inocencio said.

He said that, by 5 a.m., they should start clearing the lanes of Edsa of all heavy equipment and debris so that by 6 a.m., Edsa will be ready for the rest passage of motorists," he added.

MMDA General Manager Robert Barbers said he was giving LRTA contractors, subcontractors and consultants up to 6 a.m. every day to clear the road or the agency would be liable for fines with heavy equipment.

"We will put a tow truck on standby just in case LRTA contractors fail to deliver on their promise to remove their equipment before 6 a.m.," he said.

Inocencio also said that most persons yet to be affected by the project will be demanded on or before Dec. 10 to move traffic on the thoroughfare.

According to Inocencio, during a meeting with LRTA officials, the MMDA has agreed to temporarily remove the loading bay on Edsa-Roosevelt to give way to the project.

The structure, however, will be rebuilt later on with the LRTA shouldering the costs, he said.

Katrina names 4 more in video scandal

By Tina G. Santos

ACTRESS KATRINA HALILI yesterday named four other people who could be responsible for the spreading and distribution of copies of her sex video with economic engineer Ito Morales Rico Jr.

Accompanied by lawyer Raymund Palad, Halili asked the National Bureau of Investigation to look into the possible culpability of Gov. Antonio Cedric Lee, Manuel "Steve" Mahinay and Joey Ensandoy.

Morales described Antonio as the son of socialite Hedy Antonio. Ellen Antonio is computer expert and alleged owner of Villanueva Computer Solutions. Ensandoy was an employee of Bels Medical Group who opened Morales's laptop," Palad told reporters.

"These names did not come from us but were mentioned during the hearings conducted by the Senate Committee of Justice and the Professional Regulations Commission," the lawyer added.

Palad explained that the four new names were in addition to the names shown by Vicky Belo, Hayden Kho Jr. and Dr. Nick Antonio Cline. Dr. Mark Herbert "Emil" Rosario and Princess Marie Velasco, whom the DOJ had earlier asked the NBI to investigate for allegedly uploading the video on the Internet.

In an Sept. 17 resolution, the DOJ charged Kho with the violation of Republic Act 9262, or the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004, for secretly videotaping his tryst with Halili, and later copying her "mental distress and anguish" when the video came out in public.

Although the DOJ dropped Halili's complaint against Belo, Cline, Rosario and Velasco after it found no evidence to charge them as co-accused, it recommended that the NBI conduct some investigation about the four. Belo and other persons who could be involved in spreading the video.

"Since we prohibit the liability of the personalities who could be included in the case, then we will be filing charges against them. In time, we will issue subpoenas to them," added De Lemos.

Halili said she is willing to forgive and be friends with the people involved, including Kho.

"I'm willing to forgive, that's just human," she said in Filipino. "But how can you forgive somebody who has not even apologized? And before anything, I intend to pursue criminal charges against the people responsible for this issue."

"Still, I still wish everybody, including those people, a Merry Christmas," she added.

The sex videos of Kho and Halili were circulated in the internet and later in black market video stores. And were the ones the subject of a Senate inquiry.

The videos also confirmed claims by rumors that Kho and Halili were recently seeing each other even while Kho and Belo were publicly known to be lovers.

In his defense, Kho admitted having recorded some of his trysts with Halili, although he said he had no intention of showing it in public.

He added that Halili knew they were being recorded in three of the videos released to the media.

Halili had told the DOJ panel that the fourth video that made its way to the Internet was taken without her consent, and that this was tantamount to a crime against her because she was through "psychological suffering."

She also claimed he did not count Halili and that it was the actress who initiated him while they were under the influence of drugs. He added that he would not be charged with violation of RA 9262 because there was no use of force and the three sex videos involving he and a minor. She also said he had no participation in the dissemination of the videos.

The DOJ had earlier issued a decision resolving Kho's motion for reconsideration but Monday.

ACTRESS Katrina Halili and her lawyer, Raymund Palad, show reporters a copy of their letter asking the National Bureau of Investigation to probe four people for their possible involvement in the uploading of her sex video with Dr. Hayden Kho Jr. on the Internet. EDWARD KIMPO

GRAND CELEBRATION

Scenes of the cast of "Bibo Kabataan: The Musical (Ang Gente ko)" performing a number in celebration of Taguig City's 58th cityhood anniversary on Tuesday night at the SM City East in Fort Bonifacio. RAMON ESTELLER

Woman nabbed for stealing trader's jewelry

By Julie M. Aurelio

A WOMAN ALMOST GOT AWAY with more than P200,000 worth of jewelry which she allegedly stole from her employer's house in Quezon City on Wednesday afternoon.

Ann Grace Pasia, however, was caught by her nosy neighbors, Alando Sevilla, 49, who chased after her when he discovered the loss of his valuables.

Pasia, 20, was working for Sevilla as a consignment vendor.

Sevilla, a businessman, told the police that he found out that his belongings were missing when he arrived on Wednesday afternoon at his house in Greenwoods Subdivision, Barangay Pasong Tamo.

Doing said that Sevilla had hired Pasia to work for him from Dec. 1 to 15.

But on Dec. 8, Pasia told the businessman that she had already done what he had hired her to do. She asked him for her salary and left.

The businessman said he agreed and told Pasia that he would just ask her to come back if he still needed her services.

On Dec. 9, Pasia dropped by unannounced at Sevilla's house. Only the businessman's housemaid was at home at that time.

The maid, however, came to tell Sevilla that Pasia is the one coming down from the second floor.

When he asked her what she was doing in his house, she told him that she was done so and was something which she had left inside his room.

She then left.

Drawers in disarray

When the businessman went inside his room, he discovered that someone had opened all the drawers and taken their contents out.

He quickly went through his things and found out that he was missing some P225,000 worth of jewelry.

Sevilla told the police that he was out of his house and closed other doors at the time.

When he caught up with her, he found the missing jewelry in her possession and turned her over to the police.

Supt. Lito Bruising of the Quezon City Police District's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) in Barangay Sauyo has charged with qualified theft at the Quezon City Prosecutor's office.

No bail was recommended for her temporary liberty.

Barangay anti-members celebrity which is one of the most similar operations happened in Laguna.

The case is being investigated by the police.

1 killed, 1 hurt as man fires gun in Tondo

By Tina G. Santos

A THIRD YEAR COLLEGE STUdent was killed while a 24-year-old man was seriously injured when a still unidentified man in his commando fired his gun for a still unknown reason in Tondo, Manila.

The deadly Jesus Candio, a student of University of Manila and a resident of 8 Alfonso Street in Bukit, Tondo, suffered a gunshot wound on the head. The shot while another gunshot wounded Jorge Aguilar, who lives on F. Pinoy Street, tentative under observation at the University of Santo Tomas Hospital due to three gunshot wounds in the back.

PO3 Rommel del Rosario of the Manila Police District's homicide section said the shooting incident happened at around 9 p.m. the other night in front of a house near the corner of F. Alfonso and F. Pinoy Streets.

Candio was sitting on a bench and talking to some witnesses in the area when a commotion between two groups of men broke out.

One of them suddenly fired his gun several times, hitting Aguilar and Candio.

The police said they were still trying to identify the gunman who immediately escaped after the shooting incident.

'Study ban on clearing drive'

Home page A13

line all shame and would start selling in the middle of the street. In his many journey, he would be more emboldened," he said.

However, Fernando said he would further go ill feelings toward businessmen should the latter decide to do away with his projects.

"I would not feel bad if he changes the programs I had. There are no permanent things, especially when it comes to road. In business," he said.

Fernando recently left the MMDA to pursue his ambition to seek higher office. He is the running mate of Sen. Richard Gordon, who is aspiring for the presidency.

Sought for comment, the MMDA chairman said despite the moratorium, vendors would not be allowed to occupy sidewalks or roads that had not been designated as vending areas.

"There will be no demolition until the end of the month of the existing encroachment on the sidewalks but we will not allow new vendors to occupy any part of sidewalks or roadways that have been previously cleared of obstructions," Inocencio told the reporters.

He said the agency would not permit vendors to convert streets in their presence into small sold to the heavy volume of traffic in the Christmas.

"They will be allowed to occupy on the sidewalks but once they go beyond right on the streets where they will cause traffic, we will go after them. Our instructions to demolition is does not mean we will let them put up new structures in the sidewalk," he added.

"If they encroach on the streets, then we will remove them," MMDA General Manager Robert Barbers added.

"There's no incompetency with the police or to our Chairman Fernando ..." he added.

Fire hits Quiapo area; LRT passengers stranded

By Tina G. Santos and Nancy C. Carvajal

A FIRE BURST OUT INSIDE the storeroom in Quiapo, Manila, burning several businesses.

Television reports said two children died in the blaze, but police were unable to confirm the story as the fire was still raging at press time. The report's were not the colleged victims as Mark and Ray Jason.

The fire, which broke out around 4:30 p.m. at a house along Quezon Street, quickly spread to other establishments.

Also affected was the operation of Light Rail Transit 2, as passengers were left stranded, particularly in the LRT Recto Avenue area.

Firefighters were also positioned near the Manila City Jail and Jose Rizalo Hospital, which are about 300 meters away from the site of the blaze.

Meanwhile, 293 families who lost their homes in a fire last weekend in Valenzuela City are expected to receive financial assistance from the local government.

City Mayor Rhowena Guiobatan yesterday authorized the release of P34 million to the city's Social Welfare Office to be distributed to the families affected by the fire, some 1km in Barangay Canumay.

"It's Christmastime and nobody should feel neglected," the mayor said, adding that each family would be given P1,000.

Meanwhile, Guiobatan said a community kitchen had also been set up at the Malinta-Exchange evacuation to accommodate and serve free meals to the displaced victims.

Wartime US president picks up his peace prize

OSLO, NORWAY—REMORED FOR PEACE IN A time of war, President Barack Obama is formally becoming a Nobel laureate on Thursday under such odd circumstances that even he will make a point of it.

OBAMA

In a ceremony in Oslo, the president will receive his Nobel Peace Prize medal and diploma for his work to reshape the way the United States deals with the rest of the world. He has done so under the long shadows of the war in Afghanistan, where he is ordering 30,000 more troops into battle.

Obama's Nobel speech—a tradition that goes to the winners and is billed as a lecture for the world—will explain his thinking about war, security and the pursuit of peace. He is likely to spell out the role of American leadership and the responsibilities of all nations.

There will be plenty of splendid ceremony in Obama's honor, too.

His first stop was the Norwegian Nobel Institute, where the Nobel committee meets to decide who wins the prestigious prize. All committee members will be there to greet their latest recipient as he signs the Nobel guest book. He also will meet with Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg.

In the evening, Obama is expected to serve as a torchlight procession from his hotel balcony and dine with Norwegian royalty to a dinner banquet. He will offer comments a second time there and sing his birth years to Europe covering not even two days, even with round trips.

The president and his wife, Michelle, arrived to a chilly, damp but morning after an overnight flight from Washington. He and the first lady came off Air Force One holding hands and waving, greeted by a small clutch of dignitaries. Obama was due back in Washington by early Friday afternoon.

The Nobel committee announced Obama had won the prize prize when he wasn't even nine months on the job, recognizing his aspirations much more than his achievements.

The panel cited his call for a world free of nuclear weapons, for a more engaged US role in combating global warming, for his support of the United Nations and multilateral diplomacy and for broadly capturing the attention of the world and giving it people "hope."

It was such a surprise, and doubled so loudly by some critics as premature, that the Nobel committee took the unusual step of defending itself. Obama reacted with humility, saying he was undeserving.

Obama's quick trip reflects a White House that sees little value in recognizing an honor for peace as just nine days after Obama announced he was sending more troops off to war.

Asked if Obama was excited about the music, national security aide and speechwriter Ben Rhodes responded: "I think he feels as if it places a responsibility upon him."

"It's the company that you keep as a Nobel laureate that I think makes that deepest impression upon him," said Rhodes, who was helping craft the president's speech. "That kind of adds an extra obligation to essentially extend the legacy."

Obama was considering lots of ideas for the speech and was exposed to winners from past Nobels on a final dinner aboard the Bush One on the flight to Norway, where the prime award-winning story from Peace gone unnoticed.

There outdoors in the Norwegian capital plaza 5,000 protest anti-war protest on Thursday. Protesters have plastered posters around Oslo featuring the image of Obama from his iconic campaign poster, altered with adaptations to say, "Change?"

Demonstrators plan to gather in sight of Obama's hotel room balcony, and there slogans playing on Obama's own slogans, Someone echoing them: "Change: Stop the War in Afghanistan."

The list of Nobel peace laureates over the last 100 years includes transformative figures and giants on the world stage. They include heroes of the president, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela, and others he has long admired, such as George Marshall, who launched a postwar recovery plan for Europe.

The Nobel honor comes with a $1.4 million prize. The White House says Obama will give that to charities but has not yet decided which ones.

AP

1 soldier for 1,000 Palestinians: Israelis think it's a reasonable deal

JERUSALEM—NOEM PROFESSOR GILAD Shalit asks his political science students at Hebrew University if Israel really should free 1,000 Palestinian prisoners, including organizers of terrorist attacks, for one seized soldier, as the Israeli government is currently contemplating, he hears a noisy silence.

"People feel extremely uncomfortable making it," he said. "It's so politically incorrect that you see the risk of being labeled a monster. We all feel like we know this boy and we know his family."

The negotiations for the release of Staff Sgt. Gilad Shalit, seized in 2006 in southern Israel by Hamas and other militant groups, are entering a crucial stage through German and Egyptian mediation. The prospect of the exchange has raised surprisingly little controversy given the risks of future seizures of Israelis and attacks as the hundred thousand. Polls show a strong majority of Israelis in favor of the trade.

"To us it seems reasonable although it is really not. It is emotional, not logical," said Tal Grinis, who made a documentary on the Shalit family called "Family in Captivity."

But municipals, politicians and religious scholars say that rescuing captives has deep Jewish roots, and Israel does not want to be the land of hostage-taking.

And a media culture in overdrive has placed Shalit, 23, at the heart of nearly every Israeli Jew.

"When I walk the street, people come up to me and say 'Bring back Shalit,'" Defense Minister Ehud Barak said.

Alon Liel, a former Israeli diplomat who now lectures on international relations, said lopsided prisoner exchanges had occurred from the early days of the state, some famously in 1985, when Israel handed over 1,150 Palestinian prisoners for three Israelis captured in the 1982 war with Hezbollah.

That deal was criticized when it became clear that those released had formed much of the command structure of the first Palestinian uprising in the late 1980s. Those who have expressed their concerns now the impending deal have generally focused on such future risks. But ethics say the risk is exaggerated.

Levi Weinstein-Richmen, a rabbi who presides over Congregation Beit Hamedrash in Jerusalem, said the controversy over Shalit was precisely what made life so different in Israel from his native United States and to him so appealing. "There is zero distance between the Shalit family and the rest of the country," he said. "It is very, very personal."

NYT

WORLDBRIEFS

Pakistan detains 5 Americans linked to militant group

WASHINGTON—Five young Muslim-American men from the Washington suburbs who disappeared last month were detained in Pakistan on Wednesday in a police raid on a house linked to a militant group, American and Pakistani officials said. One of the men had left behind a video calling for the defense of Muslims in conflicts with the West and suggesting that "young Muslims have to take something," said one person who had seen the video, describing it as a farewell or martyrdom video of the kind sometimes made by extremists planning suicide attacks. The five men were detained at a house in Sargodha in Punjab province that was occupied by Khalid Farooq, the father of one of the men, Waqar Farooq, an official familiar with the case said. The elder Farooq is believed to have ties to Jaish-e-Mohammad, a banned Pakistani militant group, the official said. NYT

Canada's top general admits knowledge of prisoner abuse

OTTAWA—Canada's top general revealed Wednesday the military knew that at least one detainee was tortured by Canadian forces was later tortured in Afghan custody. General Rick Hillier's admission stoked the fury of opposition parties who demanded that Canada's defense minister resign over the affair. Canada's chief of the defense staff told a hastily arranged news conference he wanted to correct a statement he made in testimony to lawmakers about this June 2006 incident involving suspected Taliban fighter handed over to Afghan police. "The individual who was beaten by the Afghan police was, in fact, in Canadian custody, and then the 4000 Afghan National Police took control of him to facilitate his movement from the battlefield" to a Canadian outpost, Hillier said. "The Afghan police did abuse this individual, and our people did the right thing and took him back." AFP

Zelaya negotiating to leave Honduras

TEGUCIGALPA—Honduras and Mexico are negotiating a deal that would let deposed president Manuel Zelaya end his refuge at the Brazilian embassy and leave the country, however Honduras late Wednesday rejected a Mexican request to grant Zelaya safe passage to leave, saying that the ex-leader could leave the country only if he is seeking asylum. Mexico's request "does not contain a request for asylum, or unfortunately we cannot grant it," acting Interior Minister Oscar Matute told state broadcaster Zelaya, who insists he is the legitimate president, refused to play along. "I am not seeking asylum in any country," he told Venezuela-based Telesur television network. "What we have proposed is, in the case of an eventual exit from the embassy, it will have to be as president of the Honduran people," he said. Zelaya's overthrown and blocked out of Honduras in a military-backed coup in late June, clandestinely returned to his country and has been staying at the Brazilian embassy in Tegucigalpa since Sept. 21. AFP

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF FOOD AND DRUGS

10 December 2009

DOH-FDA ADVISORY
No. 2009-010

SUBJECT: REPORTED PROLIFERATION OF EXPIRED PROCESSED FOOD PRODUCTS INCLUDING DAIRY PRODUCTS IN THE MARKET

As the holiday season nears, there is an influx of demand by the consuming public for pre-packaged or processed food and dairy products. Recent reports has reached the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that some retail establishments or individuals are unscrupulously selling, offering for sale and/or distributing expired pre-packaged or processed food including dairy products. Once expired, the safety and quality of these products are already compromised which may cause serious injury or illness to a consumer who have eaten or consumed the same.

In the interest of public health and safety, the public is strongly advised to exert extra caution when purchasing pre-packaged or processed food products including dairy products. The manufacture, importation, exportation, sale, offering for sale, distribution, and transfer of any food products beyond its expiration or expiry date is prohibited under Republic Act No. 9711 or the Food and Drugs Administration Act of 2009. Thus, any knowledge or information of establishment or person selling any expired products must be reported immediately to the FDA for its immediate action in accordance with the said law.

Finally, all manufacturers, importers, distributors, and retailers of pre-packaged or processed food including dairy products are reminded of their continued strict compliance with the labeling requirements being imposed by FDA by declaring, among others, the expiry date.

NAZARIA T. TACANDONG, RPh, MPA
Acting Director IV

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Quocco

World's largest polluters trade barbs

COPENHAGEN—US AND CHINA EXCHANGED BARBS AT the Copenhagen climate talks, underscoring the abiding suspicion between the world's two largest carbon polluters about the sincerity of their pledges to control emissions.

US chief negotiator Todd Stern on Wednesday urged China to "stand behind" its promise to slow the growth of the country's carbon output and make the declaration part of an international climate-change agreement.

China rejected that demand, and retorted to criticism of the US for failing to meet its 17-year-old commitment to provide financial aid to developing countries and to endorse restrictions of carbon dioxide and other gases warming the Earth.

"What they should do is some deep soul-searching," said Yu Qingtai, China's chief climate negotiator.

The remarks during separate news conferences reflected the heavy lifting that remains in the 10 days before 110 heads of state and government conclude the summit, which aims to create a political framework for a treaty next year to succeed the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

President Barack Obama helped break the ice in the troubled negotiations last month, saying he would deliver a pledge at Copenhagen to reduce US greenhouse gas emissions by around 17 percent from 2005 levels by 2020. It will be the first time the US has committed to a reduction target.

China responded a day later, announcing it would substantially reduce the carbon intensity of its industry by up to 45 percent, meaning its emissions would continue to grow but at a rate lower than the economy.

Stern said China's announcement boosted optimism before the conference, but didn't go far enough.

"What's important is not just that they announce them domestically but they put them as part of an international agreement," Stern said.

Whatever actions the Chinese take to slow emissions growth should be transparent, he said, "It's not just a matter of trust."

The Chinese delegate accused the Americans and other wealthy countries of irresponsibly reneging on their 1992 climate commitments promising voluntary carbon reductions. The commitments were intended five years later to Kyoto, making reductions mandatory for most industrialized countries. The United States rejected the protocol because it did not include China or India.

During the talks Wednesday, the tiny Pacific island of Tuvalu seized the initiative with a demand that the conference go beyond a political deal and negotiate a new, powerful and binding treaty in Kyoto.

Tuvalu and other island nations are threatened by rising sea levels that scientists say will engulf low-lying areas as Arctic ice sheets and mountain glaciers melt.

"Our future rests on the outcome of this meeting," said Tuvalu delegate Ian Fry.

But in an unusually open split among the developing countries, China refused to support Tuvalu's motion for an open debate on its draft protocol. The procedural ruling doomed the island state's initiative.

Outside the conference hall, about 100 activists finally arranged a noisy demonstration in support of Tuvalu, prompting UN police to close off the plenary area and to eject anyone in the hall without the correct badge.

Environmental antagonizers have threatened disruptions over the weekend, raising fears of violence and arrests.

Danish police raided a building that the city of Copenhagen had loaned to political activists and found shields and fluorescent tubes filled with a mixture of oil and paint, apparently meant to be used in Saturday's protest, said police spokesman Jhannes Jacor Skovgaard. No arrests were made. AP

And in this corner, climate doubters

By Tom Zeller Jr.

COPENHAGEN—THEIR NUMBERS were small and former Vice President Al Gore was not among them.

But the climate skeptics who met inside a small, second-floor gallery near this city's Christianshavn neighborhood on Wednesday displayed at least as much passion for their cause as the environmental activists who have flocked to Copenhagen to push for action on global warming.

"They've got us outnumbered," said Ian Plimer, an Australian geologist, who has written several stinging rejoinders. "But we've got them outgunned."

Sliding in side rows of chairs, the group's members—who included an emeritus physicist, a gentleman farmer, a policy adviser and about 60 others—clapped softly, shared PowerPoint presentations and discussed climate. Or rather, what they see as a world gone mad over global warming.

The scientific evidence for human-driven climate change may be widely accepted. But those who gathered in the tiny parlor offered a variety of alternative explanations. One presentation contended that sunspots explain far more carbon dioxide than human activities like the burning of fossil fuels. Another presentation disputed data suggesting that sea levels were rising. Still another asserted that solar activity caused climate shifts.

Speaking of the same reader by scientists for global warming, S. Fred Singer, an atmospheric physicist, said: "They have no evidence. None."

The two-day event was organized in part to show that "climate realists," as they prefer to be called, are nothing if not diverse in their views.

But the contrarian spirit of the meeting was focused by the recent uproar over a trove of e-mail messages and documents stolen—or liberated, as the skeptics see it—from a renowned British climate research center. The material, which mentions adjustments to data, has been seized upon by global warming doubters as evidence of a conspiracy to promote the idea of human-driven climate change. Many scientists, however, have said that the substance of the messages and documents do not undercut decades of peer-reviewed science.

Even at this meeting, the skeptics' doctrine did not go unchallenged.

John Vidal, environment editor for The Guardian in London, demanded that a group's organizers explain why a variety of villages in India and Bangladesh were slowly being swallowed by the sea. And the Swedish physicist and geologist Nils-Axel Mörner had commanded the day before, sea levels were not rising.

Mörner, who has spent much time measuring sea levels in South Asia, said his most recent data pointed to plenty of erosion, but "zero rise in sea level."

There, as debates over global warming often do, the discussion dissolved into incomprehensible shouting. AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Bata, Django fall in 9-ball doubles /A20

Editor Tobbyric S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T. L. Ochoa

SPORTS

■ Eagles drag Tamaraws to PCCL rubber match /A30

THE PHILIPPINES' Mary Anne Jamero flexes muscles on an axe kick against Vietnam's Nguyen Thi Duong in the 67 kg taekwondo final. SUN.STAR

Molina, 2 jins boost RP bets to fifth spot

By Ray Leaño

VIENTIANE, LAOS—MIGUEL MOLINA DELIVERED THE FIRST outstanding gold Thursday night, joining the taekwondo jins in lifting Team Philippines out of the pits on the 25th Southeast Asian Games here.

The law trade athlete of the 2007 Games and clocked 4 foul minutes 27 seconds in the 400-meter individual medley, edging Thai Hathaigarn Jotya by .27 seconds for the gold to kick off his bid to match his four-gold output in Thailand.

Heights the benefits of a year-round training and extensive foreign exposures, Miguel Antonio Antonio and Mon Rivera ruled their respective divisions at the jin contests and to shine.

Aiming for their golden strikes in the previous games, two-time Olympian Rivera beat Nguyen Thi Dung of Vietnam, 2-1, in the women's welterweight finals while Antonio crowned the teller from Elle of Cambodia, 3-0, in their men's heavyweight match.

27TH SEA GAMES, LAOS, VIENTIANE 2009

Philippines	4	4	9	17
Malaysia	3	3	5	11
Laos	3	2	3	8
Cambodia	2	2	2	6
Brunei	0	0	0	0
Timor-Leste	0	0	0	0

Jins Rivero, Briones bag two golds

By Ray Lizarra

SENTIANE, LAOS—RANGED AGAINST REGIONAL DEVILS, TWO-time Olympian Antidoctor Rivero and big man Alex Briones stood their ground and sneered over more taekwondo gold medals for Team Philippines in the 25th Southeast Asian Games Thursday.

The 21-year-old Rivero, an international studies student at Ateneo, and Briones notched only two victories each to emerge champions due to the limited number of entries in the Binyoung Gym here.

Rivero, who competed in both the Athens and Beijing Olympics, disposed of Lane Yoly before rushing the gold with a similarly easy 9-3 victory over Vietnam's Nguyen Thi Hoang in the women's welterweight division.

Still shaking the form that earned him a gold in the recent Asian championship held in Vietnam, Briones downed Vietnamese rookie Dinh Quang Tran and mauled the taller Cambodian Sorn Rin, 17-3, in the finals of the men's heavyweight category.

The taekwondo jins have earlier given the country its first gold courtesy of the women's poomsae trio of Mary Jean Ortega, Aurora Lagman and Lucielle Alarilla, also the current world champions.

Marlon Arevalo and Ernesto Alfaro also delivered silver medals for the jins.

Arevalo bowed to Vietnam's Luong Minh Dat in the 54-kg division while Ernesto Alfaro handed 2007 SEAG silver medalist Thai Rapakorn Prueposh tooth and nail before losing, 2-6, in the women's heavyweight finals.

"I was able to seize control early, that's why she had to attack relentlessly," said Rivero, who effective foiled the Vietnamese in the finals.

"I maintained my lead and attacked at any given opportunity," added Rivero, a silver medalist in the Thailand edition."

Action in taekwondo resumes Friday with six gold medals in the men and women's featherweight, featherweight and lightweight classes.

Only Cristelle Renee failed to get a medal for the jins as she bowed to Vietnam's Ha Thi Nguyen in the quarterfinals of the 67-kg division.

The Filipinos have five bronze medals so far, two from the lungs signals of repeat talents; the men's poomsae trio and mixed doubles in taekwondo, and karambit's Noel Espinosa in the singles kata Thursday.

THE Philippines' Alexander Briones (red vest) scores an attack kick against Ho Sorn (blue) of Cambodia in the 87 kg men's final. ARIEL INUMERABLE

Molina, jins boost RP bets to 5th overall

Inquirer Staff

The twin triumphs somewhat compensated for the shocking 4-5 defeat suffered by World Cup of Pool champions Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante at the hands of Thais Nuruthai Phoonthalam and Nittirat Ratchpinit in the 9-ball doubles opener.

Though Reyes and Bustamante fought back from 0-3 and 1-4 deficits to tie the match at 4, the Thais, behind Phoonthalam's long shot in the 10th rack and break in the 11th, took the last three racks to seal the huge upset.

The three golds put the Filipinos in fifth place in the medal race with four golds, four silvers and five bronzes.

As of 5 p.m. 19 p.m. in Manila), Singapore surprisingly moved ahead with 9 golds, 3 silvers and 7 bronzes, followed by powerhouse Thailand (8-12-6), Malaysia (6-9-10) and Indonesia (5-6-10).

Philweightlifter Marlon Alawadu and heavyweight Nicole Alora settled for silvers.

Alora's 2-4 loss to Rapahoon Prasanoek rekindled memories of dubious officiating in the past after the judges awarded the Thai a late point that gave the second of the match's three-go-ing loss sudden death.

"It's a pity because I didn't even feel what they said was a point," said Alora, winner in the recent Korea Open.

Taekwondo has now chipped in three golds, two silvers and six more bronzes for the Philippine medal harvest.

Ryan Arabejo failed to defend his men's 208lbs backstroke title, settling for the silver, but countgold medalist should emerge from the pool as competition heats up.

The 49er men's team swept Indonesia 3-0 and its women counterpart squeaked by third-seed Vietnam as they made it to the semis semifinals to be played Friday.

Bata, Django fall in 9-ball doubles

By Rocah Trinidad

SENTIANE, LAOS—WHAT HAS LOOKED LIKE sure gold got stolen yesterday when the World Cup of Pool champions tandem of Efren Reyes and Francisco Bustamante suffered an upset against an unheralded pair from Thailand, 7-4, in the men's 9-ball doubles at the 25th Southeast Asian Games here.

Thais Nittirat Ratchpinit and Nuruthai Phoonthalam broke first and raced to a 3-0 lead before rolling on luck and incredible jockeying to score the stunner that eliminated the highly favored Filipino pool legends.

The setback, totally unexpected, visibly stung Reyes who stood grim and speechless outside the competition parlor of the Sanchan Hotel as he regained composure and posed for pictures solicited by Filipino onlookers here.

"Wala kaming masabi at talagang sarilong away-in (We lost the lag and were only luckless)," Reyes explained.

"But RP clan finally scored in the fourth rack and clinched with a three-frame streak to end up, 4-all, before slipping behind again to the next rack, 4-5.

In the 10th rack, Bata defended and set up a block on the 2-ball but Phoonthalam escaped an unfavorable escape and scored with his jump-ine, 6-4.

The Thais then finished off their rivals as Phoonthalam, after sinking an end-to-end bank shot off a Bata real placement, hit the 9-ball via a combination.

The Thai banged the left-corner pocket to bag the 9-ball bounced and mysteriously rolled to the lower right corner hole for the big winner, 7-4.

"Wala akong masisisi sarili, pero sobrang swerte si Thai! (I can't blame myself for anything. I did my best but the Thais were really lucky)," Reyes said.

The 9-ball doubles was only one of the five events the RP pool contingent hoped to win here.

World veteran's 10-ball champion Bubbles Aunit has been tapped to go for the gold in two-events, 8-pool singles and 9-pool singles, but Bata was left with only one last event, English billiards singles, which he does not enjoy playing.

Django will on longer see action, but save time world champion Ronnie Alcano, former world No. 1 Dennis Orcollo, Rustil Gallego and Candy Jalbuena will try their luck in contending RP pool events.

Former World 9-Ball Championship runner-up Roberto Gomez is paired with Carlo Biado in the snooker doubles while international Rodolfo Luces is entered in the 3-cushion event.

"I hope I get lucky," said Biado, a double-gold medalist in the 2005 Manila SEA Games and the 9-ball titlist in the 2007 Thailand SEA Games. "Fifty-fifty," she said of her chances.

Luces, serious in his cue bid, also drew a first-round bye in the 9-ball and won't see action until Dec. 15, when she battles the winner of the match between Indonesia's Juliana Dewi Lestina and Thai Wanaporn Poomsakong in the semifinals.

Aunit, a protege of local billiards godfather Antonio "Paeng" Nepomuceno, will start her bid in the women's 9-ball on Dec. 15 when she faces Lao Saysouk Chithdanh.

With a report from Rey Lizarra

Pursue cycling case with COA, Mikee told

SENTIANE, LAOS—JUSTICE THE CASE IN THE proper court.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose Cojuangco Jr. on Thursday urged Integrated Cycling Federation president-cum-Imus lawmaker Rodolfo Reyes to bring the issue to the attention of the influential Court of Arbitration of the International Olympic Committee.

In a meeting with Philippine sportswriters at the host Quan Hotel, Cojuangco said the matter rammed to cycling's governing body in the upcoming cycling, which had its pull out of the 25th Southeast Asian Games here after the international federation of cycling (UCI) rejected the appeal of the Southeast Asian Games Federation to let down compete.

"That dilemma will only end if Mr. Reyes brings the issue to the Court of Arbitration," said Cojuangco. "The matter go on because our athletes are suffering."

Cojuangco also chided Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino, head of the Philippine Cycling Federation, the body designated by the UCI to accredit Filipino riders, for his "pompous demeanor" in denying the request of the SEA Games Federation in behalf of the RP cyclists.

On Dec. 7, the SEAG Federation appealed to the UCI for the issuance of a one-time permit to allow the 18 Filipino cyclists to compete in the 50th anniversary of the Games.

The UCI, however, did not reply to the request.

FILIPINO Kelly Kay Rojas attempts to lift 112 kg in the clean and jerk of the women's 48-kg division in weightlifting at the National University gym in Vientiane. Rojas missed out on a medal. ARIEL INUMERABLE

Aiba grants RP plea to restore pin class

By Rocah Trinidad

SENTIANE, LAOS—THE 2009 major RP boxing team remained intact yesterday after a request from the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines to restore the pinweight division was granted by the world amateur boxing body.

Pinweight Bill Viernes, a silver medalist in 2005 and bronze winner in the 2007 SEA Games, was allowed to compete after the Amateur International Boxing Association granted a request by Abap executive director Ed Picson for the reinclusion of the 49-kg class in the Laos SEA Games calendar.

Picson said they brought Viernes here not knowing the pinweight division had been scrapped from the 2009 competitions because it was not in the Olympic list.

"So it turned out, member boxing countries were not formally informed of the non-inclusion of the pinweight class in this year's calendar," Picson told the Inquirer.

Picson said he was asked to elevate his case to the Aiba and sent a letter to Aiba president Dr. Ho Ching Wu explaining the case.

The letter was endorsed by Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose Cojuangco Jr.

Donning the RP boxing lineup are pinweight Bill Viernes, light flyweight Harry Tañamor, flyweight Rey Saludar, laureate Aemi Tipon, featherweight Charly Suarez, and lights welter Jerrys Ladon.

Competing in the women's division are bronze Aljhoren, silver Xiste Ajuan, Mitchel Martinez and Josie Gabuco.

The dates has been rescheduled for today with boxing competitions firing off in the afternoon.

Getting a kick from poomsae

ONE GAME AT A TIME

Ser Sarmenta

THE GOLD-MEDAL TRIUMPH OF CAMILLE Alarilla, JESSA Lagman and MARY JEAN ORTEGA in the poomsae competitions of taekwondo in the ongoing Laos Southeast Games was a welcome splash of good news.

Any gold medal by Filipinos in any international competition is admired. But don't blame many for asking, "What is poomsae?"

Without getting too technical, Ateneo sportswriter Ray Lizarra explained that poomsae is the equivalent of katas in karate-do. There are no contact bouts but rather it's individual-versus-imaginary-opponent form.

Tradition and philosophical reverence merge in the movements, with each step one surely signifying seeking or defense but also a burden of human meaning.

It takes discipline and strength to stay within the confines of the spot. The smallest slip in concentration or even the slightest sign of hesitation could be head-given a loosing opinion that seeks perfection.

You feel like a dance crew choreographer where adjusting after a lapse in the choreography can be accepted as flexibility and showmanship.

We watched on a 60-liter video of their performance in the world championships in Egypt last week and shudder. Lagman's 0.07 brings victory moved as no cuts. The paradox were delivered precisely and the kicks were almost at the same level.

To achieve this level of precision, one can easily imagine the years this trio put in to achieve their triumphs in Egypt and Laos.

The golden medals of the three gold medalists, or rest in the sport jargon, undoubtedly filled the spirits of a nation downtrodden with defeats. But pins too is delighted to bear with their triumph.

• • •

The bronze here is that Rizza are raising other sources of gold in international competitions aside from our traditional favorites like basketball, billiards and boxing.

The material sure are a gold mine with a large number of disciplines and weight categories available. Swimming and athletics hold out tantalizing medal-fantasy spaces. And so are shooting, gymnastics, cycling and other much-vaunt disciplines.

Taekwondo is actually a very popular school sport in the country with competitions happening almost weekly. Many parents encourage their children to pick up the sport to build confidence and discipline. And the sport has also achieved world-class champions can be spotted and subsequently developed into world contenders, like our golden poomsae trio.

Let's hope that Laos games introduce us to more golden performances from sports and athletes we hardly know. Perhaps, when we become familiar with their disciplines, we won't have to really worry where the gold medals will come from.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Discussing Rizza, a delightful collection of essays and poems on the subject edited by writers, is now in bookstores. For regular by-lessons Sunday Magazine associate editor Basil de Silva, the book features the travels of Ambeth Ocampo, Rolando Quijano, Joseph Ejercito and others. Enjoy the variety of perspectives and insights culled from RP life in abroad and probably the contribution over a take on Jim Paredes's time spent counter by the bay, and how the city remains loved in its quiet hours despite brief visit/frustration.

2 officials rue Bitbit's fate

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THEY SHOULD HAVE DULLED IN: Said Marlon Bitbit himself.

That was the sentiment of Philippine Cycling Federation president Abraham Tolentino yesterday after learning that the Laos Filipino who was ejected from the UCI has won admittedness from the Laos Southeast Asian Games competitions.

"Since it's only Bitbit who is eligible to compete, they should have lumped her and cheered for her to win the gold," said Tolentino in a text message. "They shouldn't have dragged her down."

The defending champion in the road race, Bitbit was heavily favored to repeat in her favorite event.

Reports from Laos said Bitbit was in tears when officials told her to shed her suit.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Harry Angping said it was a pity that the 21-year-old Bitbit was denied a chance to prove her worth.

"Why deprive her of the honor to represent the country and the chance to win the gold medal," Angping said.

Eagle Ridge golf fires off

MEMBERS OF THE EAGLE Ridge Golf and Country Club try to relive with their partners today and tomorrow in the Fire Ball Tournament as the golf club's first championship courses of the museum golf club in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

There are 240 members-guest teams registered for the tournament at Eagle Ridge's championship course designed by Jack Nicklaus, Andy Dye, Mick Fidler and Greg Norman.

The Sun Fly Four, presented by Sta. Lucia Realty & Development Corp. and Monteverde Gary, an elimination system, including a total Fire Ball Competition and a Tequila Shot.

The Fire Ball the Mini-golf is designed as a hole-in-one points for both days on dining course routes.

All participants are entitled to a raffle ticket for a chance to win the grand prize of another Volvo and lots more cool interesting stuff.

Tee-off for both days is at 8:30.

Bryant, Lakers put Jazz out of tune

LOS ANGELES—KOBE BRYANT SCORED 27 points and Pau Gasol had 19 points and 12 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers rallied off 30 consecutive last-quarter points to whip the Utah Jazz, 118-77, Wednesday.

Ron Artest scored 17 points for the Lakers, who rose to an NBA-best 17-3 by hedging his bets to celebrate and rose field goals in a commonly unwatched fourth quarter.

In Philadelphia, Rodney Stuckey scored 27 and hit the winner with 0.7 seconds left to lead the Detroit Pistons past the 76ers, who took their 11th straight loss, 90-86.

Allen Iverson scored 33 points in his second game with the 76ers. He hit the tying jumper with 1.06 left that made it 86-86.

Talk 'N Text, BK mix it up today

By Cashell P. Tupas

TALK 'N TEXT HOGS A SHARE OF THIRD place when it tackles Burger King today in the KFC-PBA Philippine Cup at the Smart Araneta Coliseum in Araneta City.

A victory in the 7:30 p.m. showdown with the Whoppers will allow the Tropang Texters to move past Barangay Ginebra and catch up with idle Purefoods, which comes up first second.

Armed with an even 5-5 record, Jhu Lanie dashes with stellar shooting Gary Ong in the second game of the triple bill that also features the rubber match between Smart Gilas and Rambo Bull at 2:30 p.m.

The defending champion Tropang Texters, fresh off a 105-104 nipping of the Tigers in a Phoenix road game in General Santos City on Saturday, are actually looking to boost their chances of grabbing one of the two outright semifinal slots.

Alaska entered poised to grab one of the outright berths after rolling past second-stanchioned San Miguel, 111-106, in overtime Wednesday night.

The Aces rose to 10-1 with the win.

Running seventh with a 4-7 record, the Whoppers served as many wins as they can as game a better position at the end of the classification phase.

Talk 'N Text's most memorable victory actually came at the expense of Burger King two weeks ago when the Tropang Texters rallied from a 16-point deficit to prevail, 110-101.

Mark Cardona will be a marked man after the only Talk 'N Text guard fired 40 points in the then-round victory over the Whoppers.

Basketball, football great Pacheco; 73

FORMER BASKETBALL OLYMPIAN AND FOOTball star Eduardo "Eddie" Pacheco died Wednesday night after a heart attack. He was 73.

One of the longest serving consultants of the Philippine Sports Commission before his death, Pacheco played for the nationalities in the 1956 Summer Olympics as well as in the 1962 Asian Games in Jakarta and the 1966 team in Bangkok.

"Philippine sports suffered a big loss with his passage," said PSC Chairman Harry Roque yesterday. "The PSC commonly extends our deepest condolences to his family."

Pacheco was also an awarded hoster. He was "Mr. Basketball" and "Mr. Football" in the 1950s, sharing the trophies with the late Fil Oliveros.

Pacheco's sons achieved the school's laurels in college and commercial division. Ed Pacheco led the mighty Ateneo basketball squad.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels in Quezon. Memorial will be announced.

SentrySafe
World Leader of Safes

This holiday, give a Treasure Chest

Life is full of treasures, irreplaceable family photos, jewelry and heirlooms, along with the paperwork and files that document a life. This year, protect everything that's important to you and yours with a Sentry Safe product.

Business Safes | Home Safes | Data Safes | Gun Safes

SM RETAILS OUTLETS NATIONWIDE

Exclusive Distributor

ZENREX Marketing Corporation
Tel 892-7919 Fax 894-3616 zmc@mozcom.com

Eagles drag Tamaraws to PCCL rubber match

By Cedrik F. Tupas

ATENEO BOUNDSPHEUS GUTTERBALLING display of loose basketball and blew Far Eastern U away, 98-65, yesterday to force a deciding match for the Philippine Collegiate Champions League crown at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City.

The Blue Eagles came out firing on all cylinders while pulling a clamp on the Tamaraws' gimmicks to sweep their 70-75 defeat to PBU in Game 1 Wednesday.

"I think we just played much better defense," said Ateneo coach Norman Black, whose team shot an impressive 51 percent clip from the field highlighted by a 21-of-30 conversion in the second half.

"We controlled most of Game 1 but we were not able to play good defense."

The winner-take-all showdown is scheduled at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday with the Eagles most likely to run defensive stalwart Soren Bachus, who might leave for Hawaii to play for the Philippine Patriots in an Asean Basketball League game against the Brunei Barracudas.

Nico Salva chose to cut-out high 26 points and grabbed eight rebounds, while Eric Salamat contributed 20 to power the Eagles.

The Cohen E Backs came up with 11 points and eight rebounds in what could be his final game as an Eagle.

The Eagles held DR Garcia, who has averaged 23 points in the past two games, to a personal 6 conversions low of two points this time.

Garcia, the rookie guard from Zamboanga who fired 22 in Game 1, made just one field goal in seven attempts in a 23-minute stint.

Ateneo took control with a 17-8 run early in the second quarter to grab a 39-21 lead.

WINDY Bachs of Ateneo (left) grabs the rebound off Rippykris Nwankwo of FEU in yesterday's lopsided Game 2.

SPORTSWATCH

OFW pockets biggest-ever WTA dividend

AN OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKER (OFW) WHOSE NAME PLACED UP 6.48 bet his horse on off-track betting station in Bacoor, Cav. Mesa, bagged a record P8.7 million dividend in June. If there is one "other all months of the Philippine Racing Club's New Santa Ana Park in Sun, Cavite, last Sunday.

The bettor, who wishes to remain anonymous, works in the Middle East and wins bets the money through bet-maker streaming on PRC's website, www.philracing.com. The race encompasses nearly the entire racing program, consisting of the nine and places bets through his wife.

The particular WTA event pool, which highlights the MAHLO Sweepstakes (scheduled nine PRC's million in cash), due to carryovers from the previous day's Pick 6's, which pooled no winners.

WTA event involves collecting the winning horses in seven straight races.

Central, South Luzon 'Ubasan' derby Dec. 17

NINE GROUPS LED BY THE RIZAL GAMEFOWL BREEDERS ASSOCIATION (RGBA) will collide in the first Central and South Luzon 8-Way "Ubasan" derby on next week.

The fifth intermediate holes off on Dec. 17 at Cao Coliseum. Other elimination matches are scheduled Dec. 15 at the Amanda Coliseum, also in the side of the Dec. 17 finals.

The champion will get P1,000,000; runner-up P 600,000; the 5 position P200,000 and the 4 position P500,000. Entry fee is P5,000.

SJC 'Rambulan' draws total of 2,669 entries

SAN JOSE COLLEGE'S (SJC) ALL-BRGY OMNIVOL GAMBULAN (LOCAL) Derby has started well for the year's biggest staghorning event, luring a total 389 of 2,669 entries.

At the end of the eliminations and semifinal rounds in the provinces, qualifiers now troop to the SJC for the championship rounds on Dec. 12, 14, 16 and 18. All qualifiers will have to hurdle three more fights each.

Early, spectators can witness cockpit action extra early.

180-fight Pasay 3-cocker unfolds today

THE FUNFAIR'S "BRAHMA" (RED-CUT) 3-COCK DERBY TAKES ITS first step today at the Pasay City Cockpit with more than 100 fights on tap.

Purse-wise, the elimination and semifinal rounds will be given to the lucky 16 veteran gamefowl handlers Cito Monasterial who passed away last September.

Seeing action today are friends and fellow cockers of Monasterial from, among other cockpits, Gumbo Stadium, Bulacan Mega Cockpit, Pasay Cockpit, Las Piñas Cockpit, Bataan Coliseum, Tabaco Cockpit in Cavite.

JUVIC Pagunsan steady with second straight 66

ICTSI TOUR

'At home' Pagunsan takes two-shot lead

By Maureg B. Castillo

CAMBERANE, LAGUNA—JUVIC PAGUNSAN SUBMITTED A second straight 4-under par 66 yesterday and paddled his lead over Thomas Aiken by two strokes going into the final 18 holes of the ICTSI Philippine Golf Tour's Camboang leg here.

Knocking down four birdies in his last 11 holes in a virtual repeat of his first-round effort, Pagunsan totaled 136 on a wind-swept, rain-lined North course to cross-cuffed Aiken on an unbroken.

Salvador, the double-leg winner this season, shot another 69 for 138 that kept the burly native of Davao in second place, also strokes ahead of another Camboang bet, Richard Sinfuego.

In a great display of scoring that made him a champion-day elusive overnight, Sinfuego picked up three shots in his first two holes, including an eagle on No. 2 then sparked his tournament-best 66 after an opening 75.

Reigning Philippine Open champion Angelo Que bounced back from a 74 with a 68 but remained six adrift.

Rookie pro Jonathan Fernando and Jay Bayron, the winner at the Forest Hills leg of the ICTSI Tour, remained inauspiciously in the hunt after a 70 and 71, respectively, for 141 aggregates, one shot ahead of Que.

Dharsee Rizky Marsela turned in a 72 for 143, two shots ahead of countryman Danny Lucero, who also had a 72.

Gene Bondoc, who has been threatening the field with a breakthrough win in the last three legs, again sputtered. In the second round with a 75 after opening up with a 71.

Bondoc is out of it all at 146 in a tie with Jaime Casas and Jomard Bales, who had 73s.

Cowboys Stadium likely out for Pacman fight

LAS VEGAS—PROMOTERS OF the Manny Pacquiao-Floyd Mayweather Jr. fight abruptly canceled a trip to Dallas on Wednesday, shutting a possibly final blow to the chances of Cowboys owner Jerry Jones landing the host berth for his stadium.

The trip was canceled as the last manner because Mayweather's promoters apparently decided he didn't want the flight at the new stadium. The move leaves the 80,000 Grand Sand arena in Las Vegas as the heavy favorite to host the March 13 fight.

Co-promoter Bob Arum—who got the news at his 70th birthday party on Tuesday—was upset by the trip being canceled because Jones had rearranged his schedule so he could give promoters a tour of the $1.2-billion venue.

"I'm just embarrassed, really embarrassed," Arum said. "The man (Jones) changed his whole schedule for this and you certainly want to listen to the man."

Arum said he was blindsided by Mayweather's promoter, Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer, who was to join him in Dallas along with HBO Sports head Ross Greenburg. He said Schaefer called to tell him he wasn't going to go to Dallas because he didn't want the fight there.

Representatives of the Superdome in New Orleans were also interested. The gate for the fight could be the richest ever in boxing, perhaps exceeding the $30-million mark.

A Staples Center official told the Los Angeles Times on Wednesday that the arena has made a $20-million offer to host the fight. AP

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

Export slowdown eased to 8.3% in October

Shipments down 27% to $42.89B in first 10 months

By Bonnel W. Domingo

PHILIPPINE EXPORTS FELL 8.3 PERCENT IN OCTOBER to $3.66 billion from a year ago, the slowest pace of decline in 13 months of continuous slide.

The single-digit fall in October also followed nine consecutive months of double-digit decreases since January.

Latest documents from the National Statistics Office showed that the drop in total exports mirrored a slowdown in the fall in shipments of electronics, the country's biggest earner.

The month-on-month increase in the value of exports also darkened to 0.7 percent—from 4.7 percent in September—compared to the $3.64 billion in revenues posted last September.

This brought cumulative export revenues to $31.3 billion in the 11 months to October, dipping by 27 percent from the $42.89 billion in the same period last year.

In October alone, electronics, which accounted for 59.1 percent of total outbound cargoes, fell 7.4 percent year-on-year to $2.16 billion due to the continued decrease in shipments to the US and Japan.

REPORT B2

IN THIS ISSUE

■ Pepsi unit to invest P350M for Cagayan de Oro expansion /B2
■ BSP reports net FDI outflow of $6M /B6

IBC 13 files for rehab, seeks investors

By Paolo G. Montecillo

STEEL-RUN INTERCONTINENTAL BROADcasting Corp. is seeking the mercy of new investors to bring IBC back into the 34-year-old television station.

The operator of sequestered TV station IBC 13 yesterday said it had filed a petition for rehabilitation before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 93.

This was done to "ensure the rehabilitated operations and focus the government-controlled network's goal in achieving its rightful place in the radio-TV broadcasting business in the shortest possible time," IBC president and chief executive officer Jose B. Javier said.

The search for investors renewed plans, which were earlier shelved by the current administration, to privatize IBC.

There were no other details given in the statement.

Javier said the recent acquisition by the group of Manuel V. Pangilinan, chair of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., of Prime Media Programming's TV-5 revived interest in the country's broadcasting sector.

The industry has been described as a virtual duopoly given the dominance of the Lopez-led ABS-CBN Broadcasting and GMA Network Inc.

IBC operates several TV stations in key parts of the country, aside from its IBC TV 13 in Metro Manila, the company also runs IBC TV-5 in Baguio City and the Mountain Province, IBC TV 13 in Laoag City, IBC TV

BUSINESS B2

Stocks end higher

SHARE PRICES CLIMBED 0.80 PERCENT higher yesterday as investors followed an overnight rise on Wall Street, dealers said.

The composite index added 25.33 points to 3,208.17, while the all-shares index gained 8.66 percent or 15.83 points to 1,870.00.

A total of 3.74 billion shares worth P2.16 billion changed hands although decliners outstripped advancers 69 to 44, with 65 issues unchanged.

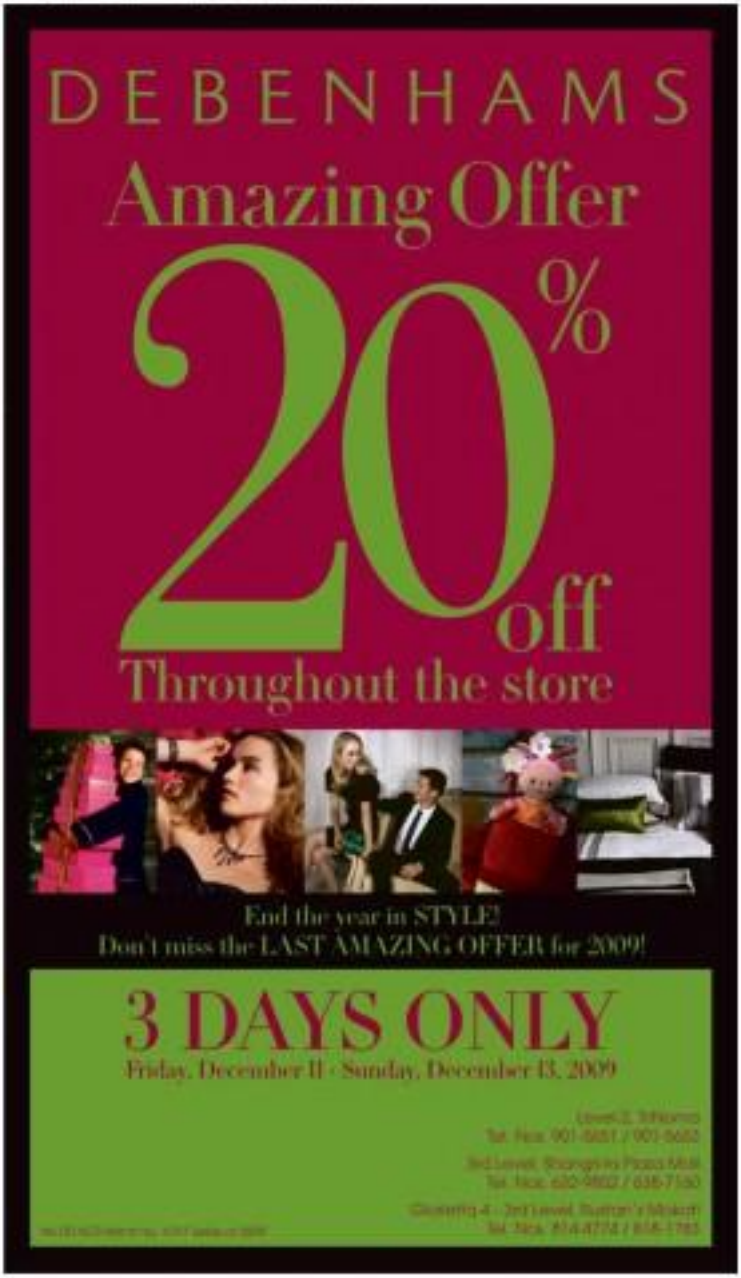
The peso traded at 46.1 to the dollar.

"We expect most of the same factors—the market is likely to have ordinary-to-fair upward bias," Joseph Pisani of Eagle Equities told Dow Jones Newswires.

He put the next resistance at 3,100 with the support at 3,000 as market activity winds down toward the Christmas break.

Top traded Philippines Land added 1.96 percent to P13 while Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. rose 1.16 percent to P2,620. Energy Development Corp. was unchanged at P4.25.

AFP



Pepsi unit to invest P350M in Cagayan de Oro expansion

By Doris E. Dumlao

PEPSI COLA PRODUCTS PHILIPPINES Inc. has approved a P350-million fresh investment to double the capacity of its beverage manufacturing plant in Cagayan de Oro.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Pepsi Philippines said its board has approved the addition of a production line to expand manufacturing capacity.

The expansion will allow Pepsi Philippines to produce seven million additional cases of beverage a year, thereby doubling the current capacity of the Cagayan de Oro plant.

The new production line is expected to be completed by November 2010.

This is in line with the company's plans to expand its manufacturing capacity to Mindanao given that it was running 100 percent capacity utilization rate. In latest advise, the utilization rate was at about 70 percent of existing capacity.

Firm to double manufacturing capacity

Pepsi Philippines, which has a market capitalization of about P6.6 billion, has produced about 170 million case cases of beverage this year. About 80 percent of the soda giant's business still come from the sale of carbonated drinks like Pepsi, 7-Up, Mountain Dew and Mirinda. But the non-carbonated business has been growing at 30 percent annually over the last three years or over three times the trend growth of the carbonated drink business.

The company has an estimated 28 to 25 percent market share of the carbonated drinks and 23 percent of the non-carbonated drink segment.

Among its non-carbonated products are Lipton Iced tea, Tropicana, Gatorade, 'n'ing energy drink and Propel Vitamin water.

The company also plans to introduce to the market new products such as coconut juice drinks.

Pepsi Philippines has also committed itself to replacing the use of fossil fuels with renewable sources. Within few years, it seeks to lessen its dependent power-generating facilities running on renewable energy like biomass, solar, wind and biogas to each of its 11 manufacturing plants across the country.

The facilities will be put up through the build-operating-transfer scheme with a partner with expertise in power generation. These facilities will produce electricity steam for bottle-washing operations, reduce dioxide for production and chilled water for refrigeration and cold storage.

Cordial corporate takeover

THE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY is abuzz with rumors that management entered into the country's biggest food acquisition ever, San Miguel Corp., may soon change hands.

The recent purchase by a company identified with businessman Ramon Ang of the 28-percent stake of the San Miguel Brotherhood Plan in SMC could, if combined with other acquisitions by other Chagum-led companies, give him the majority in SMC.

Unlike other high profile companies that become (and continue to be) the target of takeover maneuvers, the shadowy in SMC, if it pushes through, is expected to be cordial.

The top boxes of SMC, Ginebra Corporate, and Ginebra are astute businessmen who carefully choose their acquisition battles.

With other equally profitable investments in the country available and the massive financial resources at their command, they have better things to do than engage in a proxy fight that may only benefit the business predator waiting in the wings.

From the strategic standpoint, a friendly takeover would strengthen shareholder value and enhance SMC's standing in the stock markets where its shares are traded.

Due diligence

The plus factor for friendly takeovers is, they offer few surprises or disagreements.

When the incoming management conducts its due diligence review of the target company ahead of the takeover, examining its books and records is hardly a problem.

The incumbent company officers cooperate to the activity either because they are under strict instructions to do so or they want to earn brownie points with the new owners.

The good marks will come in handy when the new management tries to liberate or who among them should be retained and who should be given their walking papers.

Both front pushing access to important documents. On sealed relations allow the future owners, if they desire, to talk directly to key personnel to gain more information about the company.

Properly conducted, the due-diligence review can give a fairly complete and accurate picture of the company, including the skeletons in its closets.

Thus, after the takeovers the new management cannot be heard to complain, especially in case things turn out differently, that it was conned into buying into the company.

Resistance

In obvious reasons, unwanted or hostile takeovers are met with vigorous resistance by the target company.

At the first sign of a possible unwanted takeover move, the target company immediately puts up all kinds of defenses to ward off the attempt, or make that effort very expensive for the "enemy."

These measures are described in the business stories as "poison pills" or "shark repellents."

For example, the company will amend its by-laws to allow its stockholders to buy preferred shares at low prices if an outsider acquires, say, 35 percent of its stocks.

As soon as the unwelcome purchase is done, the preferred shares are be sold, and the company will be obliged to buy it at a price triple their original selling price.

Thus, after the takeover, the new owners would have to scrounge for money to shore up the depleted funds of the company.

The strategies against hostile takeovers depend on the nature of the business of the target company and the creativity of the lawyers tasked with crafting the defensive moves.

And when lawyers get into the picture, expect the situation to play itself out in the judicial system and in the media.

Official records

With the door firmly shut against it, an enemy was unwilling to get control of a company against its wishes would have to rely on outside sources to gain its views.

If the "intruder" is a stockholder of the target company, he can invoke his right as such and demand that he be given copies of certain corporate documents.

Knowing his intentions, the company will likely come up with all kinds of excuses to avoid giving the requested records. Chances are, he may have to go to court to be able to secure those papers.

If he does not want to go through that process, he can get copies of the reports that the company is obliged to file with the regulatory authorities, e.g., the audited financial statements and income tax returns.

There is no assurance though that these documents accurately reflect the true financial condition of the company.

It is common knowledge that when it comes to preparing reports that meet the format, rather than the substance, of the law, creative and accountants are to their best elements.

With these documents as principal source of information, the aspiring owner should brace himself for possible unreported debts, unpaid credits, contractual contractual obligations and other surprises.

The familiar "caveat emptor," or let the buyer beware, fittingly applies to hostile takeovers.

The only problem I foresee is a friendly SMC takeover is it would deprive gossip columns an interesting topic to feast on.

For feedback, please write to rpel dirick@inquirer.com.ph

Export slowdown eased to 8.3% in October

From page B1

ments of components and devices.

Compared to exports in September, electronics were down 0.9 percent from P2.23 billion. The decline followed eight months of consistent monthly increases.

Ernesto B. Santiago, president of the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries of the Philippines Inc., said in an interview that the month-on-month decline in October was due to the damage from Tropical Storm "Ondoy" and Typhoon "Pepeng."

Buildings and production areas for electronics were affected by floods in particular, roads in and from Baguio City—where large factories like that of Integrated Micro-Electronics are located—were cut off in the aftermath of the calamities.

"We expect fourth quarter exports to be better than the third quarter," he said, adding that such expectation was indicated by sequential improvements in the first three quarters.

Santiago said electronics exports reached $4.32 billion in the first quarter, $5.41 billion in the second quarter and $4.22 billion in the third quarter.

"Third quarter exports were already better than the $5.60 billion posted in the fourth quarter of 2008," he added. "This will continue to pick up as the global economy improves."

Receipts from the country's second top export, which were still affected by the global economic recession representing 3.2 percent of total shipments, slid 17.7 percent year-on-year to $115.4 million.

Cathodes made of copper, which were cited with 3.1 percent of the total, rose 8.6 percent to $3.55.27 million.

Woodcraft and furniture, the fourth top export with a share of 2.5 percent, rose 1.3 percent to $95.35 million.

While with a 2.4-percent share of total were automotive wiring sets, which increased 30.5 percent to $87.20 million.

Other major earners were coconut oil, down by 30.8 percent to $77.29 million; other products made from imported materials, up 2.7 percent to $65.23 million; metal components, down 2.8 percent to $51.17 million; fresh bananas, up 21.5 percent to $27.26 million, and magnetic up 149.6 percent to $22.67 million.

Receipts from mineral products reached $101.74 million, falling by 13.3 percent.

IBC 13 files for rehab, seeks investors

From page B1

12 in Iloilo, IBC TV 13 in Cebu City and in Davao City, and IBC TV 13 in Cagayan de Oro City.

The network also operates radio stations dyRS in Iloilo, dyCI in Bacolod City and dyHG in Iloilo. A joint venture with a local media company will also see the operations of a news-oriented FM station in Boracay soon, the company said.

IBC 13 reached its peak when it became the No. 1 television station from 1977 to 1988, broadcasting a variety of programs that were naturally relevant, entertaining, informative and commercially viable.

"IBC 13 occupies one of the most desirable locations in Metro Manila, located in Broadcast City in Capitol Hills, Quezon City. IBC 13's 61-hectare lot has room for expansion or other projects that investors would likely want to explore," Javier said.

IBC was set up by the Romualdez Group of Companies of the late Marcos crony Rolito Benedicto in 1973.

The TV station was sequestered by the government after the fall of the Marcos administration more than two decades ago.

In 1990, the company became wholly owned by the state following a compromise between the then Presidential Commission on Good Government and Benedicto for the sale of the firm's shares.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

As of December 10, 2009

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CURRENCIES

December 10, 2009 Country	Unit	Core Exposure	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Tax court bars BOC from seizing $400M worth of Shell oil imports

By Amy R. Remo

THE COURT OF TAX APPEALS (CTA) has enjoined the Bureau of Customs from seizing $400 million worth of oil imports by Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.

BOC had planned to seize part of Shell's imports to offset the P7.3 billion in alleged unpaid excise taxes, which are being disputed by the oil company.

Citing the "extreme urgency" requiring "immediate action" to the case filed by Shell, the CTA issued a 60-day temporary restraining order.

The order cited, among others, the "irreparable injury" to Shell's operations if BOC carries out its threat to seize Shell's shipments beginning Dec. 11.

In a nine-page resolution, the CTA explained that the TRO would enable the special appellate court to "preserve the status without the same becoming moot and academic."

Shell's application for an extended suspension order is set for hearing on Jan. 12 next year.

"We are relieved that a grave and irreparable injury not only to Shell but most importantly, to the general public has been avoided. The TRO averted a looming gasoline shortage and the inevitable increase in fuel prices during the Christmas season," Shell counsel Jimenez Gonzales said in a statement.

Shell is disputing the BOC tax assessment covering its imports from 2004 to 2009 of Condensate and Light Catalytic Cracked Gasoline (LCCG), which are used to produce unleaded premium gasoline.

Shell argued before the CTA that it had already paid billions of pesos in excise taxes on all unleaded premium gasoline withdrawn from refinery.

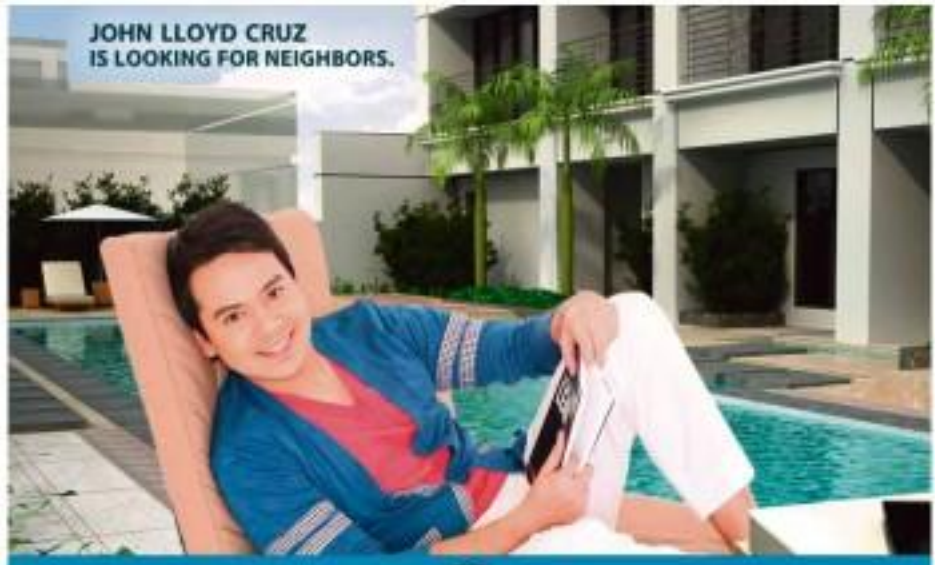
Marcelo contended that BOC's assessment on refining taxes on the imported raw materials upon entry to our country and again when being used in the production of the unleaded premium gasoline is finished products constitute unlawful "double taxation."

Citing several rulings of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) dating back to 2004, Shell also disputes the jurisdiction of the BOC to issue the questioned tax assessment.

"The BIR, the government agency tasked by law to collect all national internal revenue taxes and to interpret provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) has previously ruled that such importations are not subject to said taxes," Marcelo explained.

He added that "the BOC, in its zeal to assert its own real revenue targets, should not resort to double taxation."

Tax appeals court cites 'irreparable injury' to oil firm



People, Events & Products

E-mail us: pep@inquirer.com.ph
pep.inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

Lilia Arles Espinosa

More time for Sun prepaid subscribers to enjoy extended unlimited products

SUN CELLULAR is giving its prepaid subscribers a sweet holiday treat by extending the Sun Unlimited Plus and Sun Prepaid 30Mb promo until Jan. 31, 2008. You can still enjoy bigger savings and more days of roaming from its Barkada and Sun2 unlimited early text promos.

Sun continues to expand its subscriber base who benefit from its wide range of Sun's Unlimited and Combo products. Sun's load products are honored by the revolutionary P25 Call and Text Unlimited that gives subscribers 24 hours of non-stop calling and texting. This deal is even sweeter with Sun's Unlimited plus promo where Sun subscribers just need to load P25 Call and Text Unlimited for two straight days and they will receive a free CD25 automatically on the third day.

Those who are not under the Sun Cellular network yet are all invited to avail of this great Sun Unlimited Plus offer. Switch to Sun and buy a new SIM card of your choice and get more free load and enjoy the extended one-day validity of the initial load.

New subscribers are treated to three days of free Unlimited Sun-to-Sun calls and texts when they buy Sun P50 Super Value SIM. If they choose Sun P99 Super Combo SIM, they get additional 10 minutes of Sun-to-Sun calls, 10 Sun-to-Sun texts, and 10 texts to other networks. New subscribers who choose Sun P199 Super Budget SIM enjoy additional one-day of unlimited Sun-to-Sun texts and 15 minutes of Sun-to-Sun calls.

Go to the nearest Sun Cellular loading station now and treat yourself to Sun Call and Text Unlimited with extended validity. Put your Sun SIM cards and other load products, visit The Sun Shop nearest you. Text 2sun, stay alive call the Sun hotline 2500 or (02)995-8000, or log on to www.sunbarkada.com.ph for more details about the other products and services of Sun Cellular.

MAP BEST ANNUAL REPORT FINALIST

Gold Matrix Investment Corporation (GMIC), the investment banking arm of the Metrobank Group, was among the top 20 finalists in the Management Association of the Philippines' (MAP's) Best Annual Report (BAR) Awards for the year 2006. It is GMIC's second time to qualify in MAP's BAR awards and now also one of the only two financial institutions to have qualified for the awards this year for the past seven years. the MAP and its panel of judges aimed to encourage the observance of the principles of good governance (transparency, accountability and fairness) and to raise the financial reporting and disclosure practices of publicly listed Philippine companies to international standards. Receiving the award for GMIC during the formal ceremony held at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila were (from left) vice president Isagani Benita Pantoja, senior vice president Jennifer Ramirez, executive vice president Jose Paolino Marcelo, and corporate planning officer's manager Ms. Teresa Peñalosa.

LAFFERTY GROUP AWARDS UNIONBANK

Unionbank received two awards at the recently concluded Lafferty Group's Southeast Asian Financial Gold Awards 2007 held in Jakarta, Indonesia. The awards, organized by the Lafferty Group, recognized Unionbank for the Best Credit Card Product Innovation for Unionbank Good Spa Visa, the bank's travel card and the Best Credit Card for E-Commerce for its Unionbank Cyber Card. Both awards are under the Best Retail Bank Category. Shown are Michael Lafferty, Head, Lafferty Group; Edwin R. Bautista, executive vice president-retail banking center head, Unionbank; Manuel Tantoco Jr., senior vice president-credit cards and personal finance, Unionbank; and Daniel Black, managing director and founder, Business Research.

What every corporation needs to know

THE CENTER FOR GLOBAL Best Practices (CGBP) is holding an MCLE and CPE-accredited seminar entitled, "SEC Compliance with the Rules on Disclosures" on Jan. 22, 2008 at the Peninsula Manila, Makati City. This is the first program to discuss both financial and non-financial aspects of disclosure reporting requirements when doing business in the Philippines.

The session follows of many corporations has prompted the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to implement and enforce stricter regulatory compliance with the rules on disclosures. Majority of corporations are unaware and unprepared for this "new era of stronger compliance." Many businesses wake up to the urgency of study from ranging from thousands in millions of pesos in penalties, and even suspension or revocation of licenses to operate.

To help businesses prevent such costly mistakes, this special program will discuss and thoroughly tackle the SEC financial and non-financial rules on compliance and their interpretation, updates, and best practices. It is a disclosure guide for board directors, corporate secretaries, management, compliance officers, lawyers and other stakeholders. Participants will also learn how to overcome SEC approval or registration and beyond, how to use SEC forms and templates, and lessen the solutions, remedies and exemptions which in cases your corporation is penalized for non-disclosure violations.

Learn the rules on disclosures from SEC authorities. Lawyer Cynthia Fernandez-Callangan, the director for the Corporation Finance Department of the SEC, it is her department that directly checks, monitors, and ensures that all SEC-registered corporations in the Philippines comply with the disclosure regulations of the SEC. Lawyer Ma. Teresa Canada-Dino, CPA is the general accountant of SEC. She will discuss everything you need to know about financial disclosures including such topics as "Period-Is Financial Disclosures", "Issues and Remedies Findings in Financial Reports", "Subsidiary Control or Incorporation or Misrepresentation in the Financial Statements" and "Several SEC Memorandum Circulars Relevant to Annual Financial Disclosures."

This program is MCLE-accredited by the integrated Bar of the Philippines. Lawyers get MCLE credit units. CPAs get CPE credit units. Interested participants are encouraged to avail of the early bird and group discounts. This is a limited seats-only event and pre-registration is required. For more details, visit www.cgbp.org, fax your interest CGBP on (02) 842-7349/59 and (02)896-8968/69 or e-mail program leader Ivy Lopez-Reyes at ivy@cgbp.org.

FOTOM, MAPFRE INSULAR INSURANCE INK MOA

Fotomillenio Plaza (FMP), marketing manager Joan Miguel Santiago and Mapfre Insular Insurance Corporation (MIIC) Metro Manila Sales Supervisor Ernesto Ramos Jr. sign a memorandum of agreement on Nov. 27, recognizing FMP as a Mapfre accredited dealer wherein customers who purchase brand new cars now enjoy 3% basic rate of leasing service, free plaza parking services, free transfer of odometer, and accreditation with 4,000 insurance and accredited partners also when they purchase Mapfre insurance from any Fotom dealer. Fotom now gives you not only quality commercial vehicles, affordable prices and exceptional aftersales service but also the most comprehensive automotive insurance products in the country. Present in the MOA signing are (from left) Stephen Cortigas branch manager Ilene Mallorca, Honesto, VP-Operations Paraguya Jr., Fotom marketing manager Joan Miguel Santiago and after-sales service Arlene Bellaz. Also present (from left) are First Union Insurance and Fotomillenio Plaza dynamic assistant manager Johanna Grace Gandeza and Mapfre's dealer coordinator Robert Pelo.

PCA BARES PLANS FOR REGIONAL SHOWS IN 2008

After decades of existence in Pinoy street in Manila, the Philippine Contractors Association (PCA) is bringing the country's most important building and construction show nationwide. Shows at the recent contract signing between the PCA and parent association Samar Contractors Association Center Inc. (SCAC) were Carlos Cantos Jr., vice president (CVP) Jun Bonifacio (SCAC) Jun Bonifacio, PCA treasurer; (from left, seated) Ildefonso Dinella, PCA director; John Bautista, PCA treasurer; (from left, seated) Glen Chua, PCA secretary; Wilfredo Guerrero, SCAC president; Cesar Cantos, CVP; (standing) Rolando

Federal gov't extends $700-B bailout until Oct.

Officials insist fund still needed to prevent further turmoil

WASHINGTON—THE OBAMA administration has extended the $700 billion financial bailout program until October, setting up a struggle between Democrats who favor using some of the leftover money to help generate jobs and Republicans who say it should be used to reduce soaring budget deficits.

The administration insists the bailout fund is still needed to prevent further turmoil in the banking system. In announcing the decision Wednesday, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said extending the program would also help homeowners struggling to avoid losing homes to foreclosures and small businesses having trouble getting loans.

The decision came on the same day the administration acknowledged two key bailout programs lost a total of $61 billion. The bailout of insurance giant American International Group Inc. and the Bank of America-Merrill Lynch automobile arch cost more than $30 billion, according to Treasury data disclosed in a report from the Government Accountability Office.

The administration's new projecting the increase in the government's from the bailout program still be around $141 billion—$200 billion less than it estimated two months ago.

President Barack Obama said the freed-up money can help reduce the record-high federal budget deficit and "invest in job creation so Main Street can recover more than Wall Street."

That effort seeks to combat the nation's 10 percent unemployment rate by providing tax breaks to encourage companies to hire new workers, increase bank lending to small businesses and provide a fresh round of infrastructure spending.

Democrats initially hoped to pass Obama's proposals this month. But the proposals likely will slip until early January given opposition from Republicans and the to-do list already facing Congress as it struggles to finish business before Christmas.

Republicans vowed to keep trying to close down the rescue program by the end of this month. They said any leftover funds should be devoted exclusively to curbing the country's soaring budget deficits.

Republicans also criticized Treasury for using the troubled Asset Relief Program as a slush fund to support programs that Congress never intended—including bailouts of auto makers and failing insurance giant American International Group Inc.

"American taxpayers have had enough of open-ended bailouts that have left them stuck with trillions of dollars in new debt," House Republican Leader John Boehner said Wednesday. "TARP should be shut down by the end of the year. It's time to get the government out of the bailout business."

Geithner contended that the bailout program helped avert a worse financial meltdown.

Financial conditions have improved, and the economy has finally pulled out of a deep tailspin and is starting to grow again.

Repayments from banks alone accounted TARP repayments will soon total $116 billion, including $45 billion from Bank of America Corp.

The government expects up to $175 billion in repayments from rescued companies by the end of next year, he said. AP

Dubai ruler's firms, tower builder drop merger plans

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES—The Dubai developer building the world's tallest skyscraper said Wednesday it would call off a planned merger with property companies controlled by the ruler-owned conglomerate, ending fresh questions about Dubai's debt problems and its willingness to repay.

Emaar Properties' surprise decision set to combine with three firms owned by Dubai Holding came after the real estate stock exchange plunged for a third straight day, as investors dumped holdings in the troubled Arab business town amid a scramble for details about the depth of its credit woes.

"There are a lot of different policies going on at once, and it's not exactly clear where the next steps are going to be," said Omar Kamiha, a senior analyst at Standard Chartered Saadiyat who monitors Gulf state investments.

"Maybe someone has an idea of what's going to happen next, but there hasn't been a lot clarity."

That lack of information has stoked widespread fear, prompting ratings agencies to sharply downgrade the credit worthiness of many companies once seen as having strong state support.

The Dubai Financial Market's benchmark index dropped 4.3 percent at Wednesday's close, building on deep declines since Monday. The exchange has seen its yearlong gains erased, following the announcement that Dubai World, the emirate's biggest conglomerate, needed to restructure $26 billion in debt.

Dubai officials have said they will not guarantee debts racked up by the state-run company, which owned for years as one of the city-state's chief engines for growth.

"There's a huge level of uncertainty and investors are not interested in gaining more exposure to Dubai," Julian Bruce, director of institutional equity sales at EFG-Hermes, said of the market's slide. "That's why everything is for sale."

Analysts at Barclays Capital said in a research report that Dubai Holding could be "next in line" with credit problems.

Word of the canceled merger came in a statement sent by the Dubai ruler's media office, saying Emaar's board of directors decided the long-anticipated tie-up was not economically feasible right now. It did not elaborate.

A later statement clarified that the decision was made and announced by both Emaar and Dubai Holding, which is controlled by Dubai's hereditary ruler, Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. AP

A HANDOUT picture from Emaar properties shows the Burj Dubai in the Gulf emirate, the world's tallest building. Dubai's debt woes spread from the stock market to the corporate sector, with giant property developer Emaar canceling plans to merge with state-owned Dubai Holding, describing the link-up as unfeasible. AFP

Debate rages over Wall Street regulations

WASHINGTON—CONGRESSIONAL leaders were a vast swarm of Wall Street regulations kicks off in a charged partisan atmosphere and under pressure from big banks and business lobbies determined to change it.

At the same time, moderate and liberal Democrats are displaying their muscle, whittling committees before a single House of Representatives vote and laying the groundwork for some contentious votes as lawmakers work to first vote through 30 or more amendments to the regulatory overhaul.

A final vote is tentatively set for February.

Democratic leaders scrambled Wednesday after party centrists rebelled and threatened to delay the full d'the House measure allowed to vote on their proposed amendments.

At issue were changes that sought to raise regulatory provisions on consumer protections and complex derivatives trades. The impasse broke, and party leaders were expected to announce that an hour with high-level Treasury Department officials to Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office resulting in a compromise.

Last week, members of the Congressional Black Caucus signaled they would withhold support for the bill if minority communities hard hit by the recession didn't get economic assistance. The bill now contains $3 billion they sought to help unemployed homeowners avoid foreclosure, and $1 billion for neighborhood assistance.

Republicans have criticized the big banks bailout, a response in public anger at the notion that some institutions had grown too big to fail and pushed the nation's financial system to the brink of collapse.

The overall measure is Financial Services Oversight Council to monitor the financial system and watch for future threats. AP

US foreclosures slow down, but more may still lose homes

NEW YORK—US FORECLOSURE activity fell in November for the fourth month running, but improvement from July's record high came from loan modification programs that may fail to permanently remedy many failing mortgages, a real estate data company RealtyTrac said on Thursday.

Foreclosure filings—including notices of default, auction and bank repossession—dropped 8 percent last month and were down 11 percent from the July peak.

Still, filings were reported on more than 300,000 homes for the ninth straight month—18 percent higher than a year ago.

One in every 417 households with a loan got a foreclosure filing in November.

While November's foreclosure notices were the lowest since February, perseverance efforts to compel lenders to modify loan terms likely mask ongoing troubles, said Rick Sharga, senior vice president of Irvine, California-based RealtyTrac.

Some 1.2 million properties will get foreclosure notices this year, up from the prior record 2.3 million last year.

"Ultimately, you'll probably see about half of those properties go back to the banks," he said in an interview. "We're not terribly optimistic."

A US Treasury bid effort to slow the pace at which distressed mortgages become are being forced out of their homes was stalled "an abject failure" on Tuesday by lawmakers.

The Treasury has vowed to be more aggressive with banks in efforts to speed loan term changes through the $75 billion Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP).

It will take months to see how many of the loans in trial modifications will become permanent, or just delay inevitable foreclosures.

Meantime, double-digit unemployment keeps derailing more homeowners from making timely loan payments.

Unemployment, soaring home prices, a lack of available credit and a wave of loans adjusting to payments that low-reserve means affordability.

These conditions offset record low mortgage rates and deep home price discounts—10 percent on average—to thwart a sustained rebound from a three-year housing crash. Reuters

Asia markets lower as debt worries linger

China extends, adjusts consumption policies

BANGKOK—EQUITY STOCK markets mostly fell Thursday, extending losses to a third day, as shaky government finances continued to unnerve investors and weak economic figures reignited concern about concerns about US recovery.

The region's newest euro declines against Wednesday on Wall Street. Oil diving below $71, a barrel weighed on commodity stocks while the dollar fell against the yen and rose versus the euro.

Recent concern about the consequences of governments piling up massive debts as they manage battered economies with unprecedented stimulus spending was reinforced by Standard & Poor's lowering its credit rating outlook on Spain to negative.

That news added to warnings from other ratings agencies about government finances in Britain and the US, a downgrade of Greece's rating, and cuts to ratings on a number of companies in debt-soaked Dubai.

Economic news in Asia added to the case for investors to remain wary of a sell-off in markets, which have been dramatically from their 52-week lows in March.

Japan's new multiannual orders, a closely watched indicator of corporate capital spending, tumbled 4.3 percent in October from a month earlier, suggesting that companies are reigning in spending as the recovery in the world's fra. 2 economy slows.

A day before, Japan slashed its third quarter growth figure, indicating the economy it much weaker than previously feared.

But, contrary to Main Street, the chief operating officer at SLI Asia Limited in Hong Kong, said uncertainties surrounding the US economy and the financial system gives troubles in Dubai and other countries were bad-news for investors to book gains from this year's rally.

"If this is a very good excuse to look to cash profits and go on holiday before the end of the year," he said. "Market sentiment remains relatively cautious."

Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei 225 stock average—also pressured by a closing yen which cuts exporter profits—was down 356.07 points, or 3.5 percent, at 9,888.88.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng retreated 344.67, or 0.8 percent, to 20,577.09 and South Korea's Kospi dropped 38.77, or 2.2 percent, to 1,815.99.

Australia's market shed 0.7 percent despite news that unemployment dropped again in November, with resource giants like BHP Billiton falling amid a lower oil price.

China's Shanghai index fell 0.1 percent.

Banking the trend, Malaysia's index climbed 0.1 percent. Thailand's stock market was closed for a national holiday.

In the US Wednesday the Dow rose 11.08, or 0.1 percent, to 10,337.07 after falling 0.4 percent Tuesday. The Dow crossed even the unchanged mark 39 times.

The broader S&P 500 index rose 4.81, or 0.4 percent, to 1,095.95, its first gain of the week. The Nasdaq composite index rose 10.74, or 0.5 percent, to 2,183.73.

Oil prices hung below $71 a barrel in Asia amid growing investor concern that US crude demand isn't improving.

Gold rose $6.30, or 0.6 percent, to $1,127.50 an ounce. AP

TRUCKS and construction vehicles are parked at a port near the Rubix industrial complex in Kawasaki, Japan. The country's core machinery orders fell in October, but the drop was small compared to a large rise the previous month, and analysts said the worst may be over for capital spending, which has been a drag on its economic recovery. REUTERS

China extends, adjusts consumption policies

BEIJING—CHINA HAS MOVED to support its economic recovery by extending tax cuts and subsidies for purchases of small vehicles and appliances, while adjusting some measures to ensure strong property prices.

Wednesday's announcement follows China's annual economic strategy meeting, with leaders promising Monday to keep economic stimulus and easy credit policies in place.

The measures aimed is seen as crucial for future growth, but economists say consumer spending amounts for less than half of China's economic activity.

The State Council statement praised online Wednesday says China should continue to focus on rural policies, including subsidies, to push consumption.

A tax cut on sales of cars with engines of 1.6 liters or smaller was extended until the end of next year, but the tax was raised to 7.5 percent from the current 5 percent—a rate slashed by half earlier this year to counter a slump in sales due to the global downturn.

Subsidies would be raised from the current 10% of up to 5,000 yuan ($878) to as much as 10,000 yuan ($2,000) for purchases of some vehicle models. But they do not apply to any vehicles with engine capacity bigger than 2 liters, the statement said.

The announcement was a further boon to automakers who enjoyed a booming business this year, with total sales exceeding 12 million units by November, up 42 percent over a year earlier according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. Of that total, 85 percent have been small vehicles.

In a move aimed at countering speculation in real estate, which has driven completion data booming prices and becoming unaffordable for many families, the government reintroduced a 5.5 percent business tax on sales of homes bought less than five years earlier.

The tax had been suspended last year as property sales slumped as the economy slowed due to plunging exports.

China's inflation rate has remained moderate this year, with the consumer price index rising 0.5 percent in October from a year earlier. That has allowed leaders to keep stimulus policies in place, but officials have said they will adjust credit regulations and other policies to counter price pressures as some sectors get heated.

Premier Wen Jiabao Wednesday pledged to help resolve the housing difficulties of low- and middle-income urban families by the end of 2011, adding 1.5 million units of so-called affordable homes per year. AP

BUSINESS

BSP reports net FDI outflow of $6M

But gross inflows still higher than outflows in first nine months

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY POSTED A NET OUTFLOW of foreign direct investments in September, an investor appetite remained low in view of the slow global economic recovery.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday reported a net FDI outflow of $6 million for September, reversing the $211 million net inflow in the same month last year and the $36 million net inflow in August.

Gross FDI inflows during the month hit $243 million while gross outflows amounted to $251 million, the BSP said.

The downturn is first the worst of the crisis in 2009, but that recovery will be a slow process.

"For September, investor appetite was more subdued than in the previous months due to the still weak global economic recovery," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a statement.

The latest net investments in September, however, did drag the country's overall FDI position in the first nine months of the year. According to the central bank, the country still registered a net inflow of $1.27 billion in the first nine months of the year, up by 7 percent from year-ago level.

"The inflows for the nine-month period was higher by 6.8 percent than the level recorded in the comparable period in 2008 on the back of stronger equity capital inflows and higher reinvested earnings," Tetangco said.

According to the BSP, investment inflows in the first nine months came mostly from investors from the United States, Japan, Hong Kong, and the Netherlands.

Sectors that benefited mostly from the improvements in January to September were the manufacturing, real estate, construction, services, financial intermediation, mining, trade/commerce, transport, storage, and communication sectors.

The BSP earlier raised its FDI net inflow forecast for this year to $1.3 billion from the original target of $940 million.

Central bank officials said the full-year projection was still attainable even if the cumulative net inflow as of September reached only $1.27 billion.

They are confident that investor interest will improve in the fourth quarter.

The BSP said the net inflow of FDIs and the strong remittances from Filipinos working overseas would help keep the country's external liquidity position healthy.

According to an earlier report of the BSP, the country's balance of payments (BOP) hit a surplus of $896 million in October, swinging from a deficit of $1.195 billion in the same month last year.

The latest BOP figure was also better than the surplus of $562 million registered in September.

BOP is the difference between the inflows and outflows of foreign currency. A surplus increases the country's gross international reserves (GIR), the total amount of foreign currency reserves kept at and managed by the central bank.

The GIR determines a country's ability to pay for its importation and settle its foreign currency-denominated obligations.

Portfolio investments hit $431M in Nov.

SOME $431 MILLION IN "HOT money" was inbound but outside into the Philippine capital market, while $216 million was brought out in the same month.

The combined is a net portfolio investments inflow of $71 million, a turnaround from a $468.8 million net outflow in November last year.

According to a report of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the November figure brought the 11-month net hot money to $401 million, reversing the $1.7 billion in net outflow in the comparable period last year.

"Foreign investors continued to bet on the Philippine market on account of the sustained growth in overseas Filipino remittances, robust reserves, healthy banking system, better than-expected corporate earnings, and the run-up in the price of gold," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a statement.

The BSP said foreign investors, after being pushed at the sidelines by the crisis, have started to look for income-generating opportunities. Emerging markets like the Philippines are extending the bulk of the new investments because of the resiliency they showed at the height of the turmoil, monetary officials said.

In the case of the Philippines, officials said investors took notice of the country's macroeconomic fundamentals that remained decent amid the global economic downturn.

Analysts said some investors were still trying to get a feel of the domestic and global economic environment due to the lingering turmoil. Nonetheless, many portfolio investors have moved investing again given the conscious that the worst of the turmoil is now over.

Michelle V. Remo

Landbank eyes 13.2% growth in farm loans

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES IS SET to release 13.2 percent more loans to small farmers and fisherfolk next year to support the sector's growth.

"The target loan releases to small farmers and fisherfolk is P26.5 billion next year," bank president and CEO Gilda Ocampo said.

Landbank's resources are currently placed at P500 billion.

The state-run bank anticipates an increase in the number of farmers who will apply for loans.

"Our coverage is considerable. We lend through cooperatives and the cooperatives to rural banks. We are also accrediting additional conduits to expand our reach," Ocampo said.

For 2009, Landbank has yet to close its books but current estimates placed the total releases to small farmers and fisherfolk at P23 billion by yearend.

As of September 2009, Landbank has released a total of P17.6 billion to some 330,000 small farmers and fisherfolk.

The bank released as of end-September some P24.5 billion in loans for agriculture-related projects of government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs).

Lending to agri-industry sector projects of local government units was at P23.1 billion.

Loans to agri-businesses reached P19 billion and loans to micro enterprises and small and medium enterprises reached P18.2 billion.

Releases for the construction of social housing, schools and hospitals reached P9.2 billion.

Alan T. Ulchenorio

Meralco inks ₱5.5-B debt deal

By Jerry E. Esplanada

MANILA ELECTRIC CO., THE COUNTRY'S biggest power distributor, yesterday signed a P5.5-billion fixed and floating rate notes facility agreement to fund its debt refinancing activities.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Meralco and First Metro Investment Corp. were the lead arranger of the peso-denominated debt facility, with SB Capital Investment Corp. as co-lead arranger and bookrunner and Trust Corp. as co-arranger.

Meralco signed the agreement with 13 investment lenders.

The company was able to raise P1.6 billion from the sale of fixed rate notes due 2016 and another P3.9 billion from the sale of floating rate notes due 2015.

"The notes will be issued on Dec. 14 and proceeds will be used for Meralco's corporate funding requirements," the disclosure stated.

Meralco first vice president and treasurer Rafael Andrada told reporters that proceeds from the planned bookrunning activity would also be used for the distribution utility's refinancing plans.

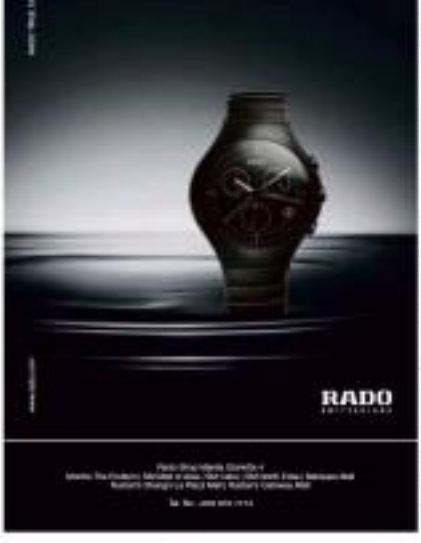
Meralco earlier said it was planning to refinance some P11 billion in existing loans within the year, should the terms prove to be favorable.

"We still have about P11 billion in existing loans that we could refinance. We'll see if we could get lower interest rates and longer terms," Andrada said, adding that the company would continue to explore refinancing opportunities."

The P11 billion worth of loans will mature by 2013, Andrada said in an earlier disclosure to the local bourse.

"The company's debt maturities are well spread out, with most of debt repayments due in 2013. Most of the debts are denominated in pesos," Meralco said.

SME FINANCE CENTER Planters Bank chair Ambassador Jesus P. Tambunting (left) embraces executive director Watcharee Limbawat of the International Institute for Trade and Development-Thailand (right) and senior adviser Bagas Hapsoro of the Geneva-based International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (center) to the run-up roundtable meeting of SME experts from the Philippines and neighboring Asian countries, which was hosted by the bank. The experts discussed plans to set up a Regional SME Finance and Knowledge Center in the Philippines.



Maguindanao massacre and fear

By Ernesto Dedoroy

COMMENTARY

NOW 23 MARKED THE DATE OF THE infamous Maguindanao massacre. Some of those who carried out the massacre belong in the government. It is alleged that a few individuals from the powerful Ampatuan clan masterminded this operation, and that they are symbols of corruption in Maguindanao. Thus, there is the saying, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Burmese civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung Sang Suu Kyi has another view (this series: "It is not power that corrupts, but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it, and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it."

Analysis

In deciding on the best action to take, it is important to differentiate the two kinds of fear. In the Maguindanao massacre, it can be said that the fear of losing power prompted those in power to expunge the opposition. And what better way to do this than to massacre those who dare oppose them.

Under those conditions, corruption flourished. For those who are either fear that contributed to the growth and pervasiveness of corruption in Maguindanao. It is said that evil flourishes because good men do nothing. No one opposed the corruption they saw.

Those people were seized by the second fear that Suu Kyi identified: the fear of the scourge of power. And when someone does oppose those in power, they are subjected to an extreme way to this scourge through the cruel and inhuman measures we all condemn today.

Regarding the first fear of losing power, it is hoped that the enlightened members of the ruling class look deep into their spiritual roots and religious teachings, accepting the results of the next elections with a spirit of no payoff, for the Voice of the people is the voice of God.

But it is the second fear that is more relevant to us who are afraid of the scourge of power. Suu Kyi says that unless we overcome the fear, corruption will continue.

Relevance to farmers

Efren Penaflorida, a former lawyer, member of the Ateneo de Manila University batch IAEM(J '63-'65-'69) that helped start the student activism of the 1970s and recently, the land self-sufficiency national program in Central Mindanao, said: "Filipino farmers are often the victims of massive corruption. But they fear the scourge of the existing powers if they strongly oppose them. It is time our farmers shed their fear and fight for justice."

Cayetano made specific reference to recent events: "What happened in Maguindanao is a gross violation of human rights and should be condemned in the harshest terms. If we cower in fear and do or say nothing about it, corruption will worsen and the farmers will continue to suffer."

The 44 federations and organizations comprising the Alyansa balance their views by denouncing the wrongs in the government and praising its good programs. When corruption is identified, organizations go individually to the Ombudsman to ensure their charges are heard. The majority chooses not to take this step for fear of government retaliation.

However, ever since the Maguindanao massacre, the Alyansa has boldly decided to use its strength in taking a specific case involving rice smuggling to the Ombudsman.

On Dec. 1, the Office of the Ombudsman allowed to help the Alyansa in investigating this matter. On Dec. 4, the Alyansa wrote a letter to the Ombudsman stating its case. Attached were documents showing that 65 rice shipments had arrived from January to July 2009. But since no rice import permits was issued this year, it is likely that the shipments were smuggled. Also, though our kilo of unmilled rice at P20, the value listed in the import documents from the BOC averages less than P0.50 per kilo!

Though the Alyansa gave this information to the BOC on Sept. 15, we have not heard a word up to now on any action against the smugglers.

This is a case where the Alyansa should fear the scourge of power. The BOC can take retaliatory action against the group for having the temerity to officially raise this issue to the Ombudsman. But taking the cue from Suu Kyi's statement, the Alyansa decided to discard this fear and fight for the rights of the farmers.

Conclusion

In a sense, the Maguindanao massacre has opened our eyes to the enormous intensity of justice that pervades our land. But instead of the massacre opening our eyes to fear, it should open our eyes to the fact that we have been in fear for too long. We have allowed corruption to be the rule rather than the exception. It is now time for us to fight for our people and put aside the fear. For as John F. Kennedy once said: "There is nothing to fear but fear itself."

(The author is chair of Agrisearch. For inquiries and suggestions, e-mail agrisearch@philsaknet.com or call/fax (02) 4022112.)

BUSINESS Friday
E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/business
Business Features Editor
Margie Quiroga-Espino

Skin care is her pot o' gold at rainbow's end

CRISTALLE Belo Henares

By Abe T. Vergara

THE ROAD THAT LED Cristalle Belo Henares, managing director of Intellipure Skin Care Inc., to handle one of the market's newest and arguably fastest growing whitening and moisturizing product lines began back in high school.

Three years after it was launched, Belo Essentials, the giant market, over-the-counter brand of whitening lotion, facial wash, soap and toner, is now reportedly carried by close to 3,000 drugstores, department stores and supermarkets nationwide.

Apart from being awarded by 3M as "breakthrough product" in 2007, the brand's soap line reportedly been outselling the competition—including regular bath soaps—at all Mercury Drug drugstores for the past two years now.

Early this year, the brand underwent a reformulation to include more potent whitening ingredients.

Safe and affordable

Agnes Belo Henares, its father, for instance, has been horrified with Kojic acid and glycerine so further satisfy the market's growing demand for safe, affordable and effective whitening products.

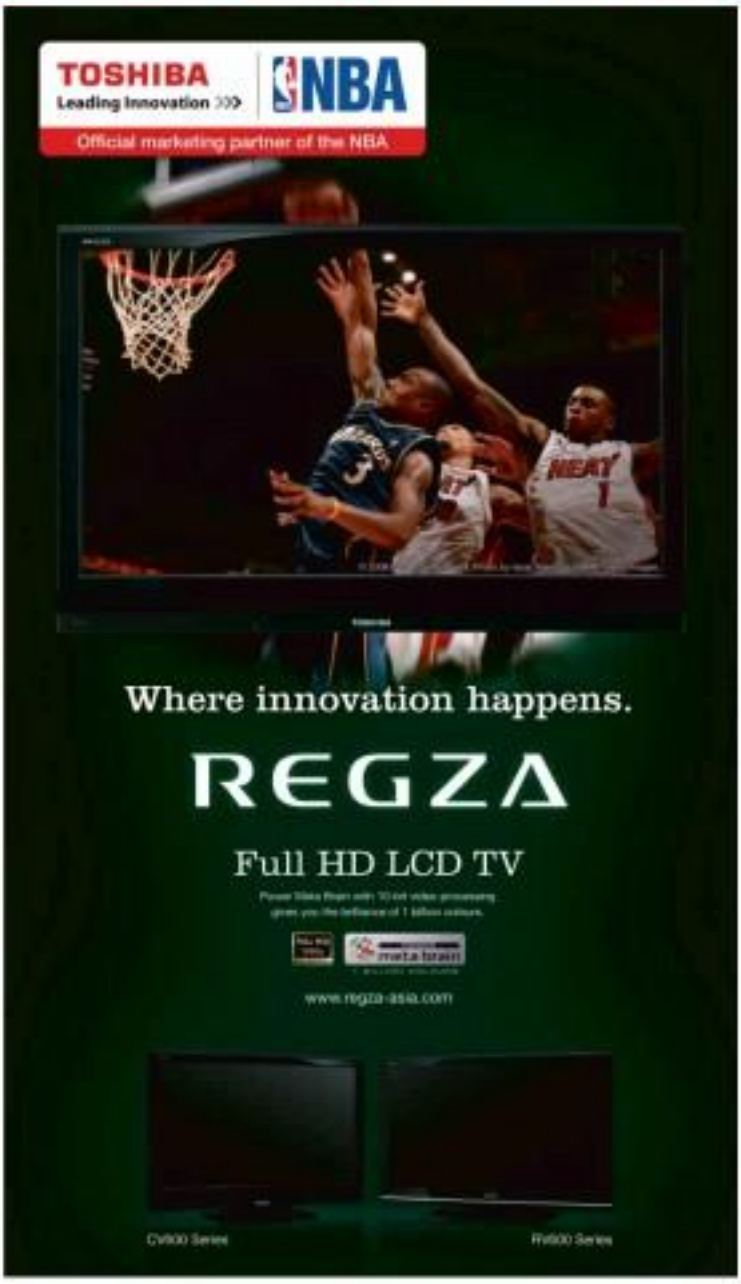
At the same time, the company has also signed up some of the country's biggest celebrities, such as Lucy Torres, Regine Velasquez, Dan Xan Padilla, Ranch Geronimo and Dax Morico, as product endorsers. It has a corporate manufacturing arm for products formulated by an in-house team of chemists and dermatologists.

In a recent test the company conducted, Belo Essentials' soap emerged "three times better" than the country's leading papaya soap in making a person's skin whiter by decreasing her melanin content, says Henares.

Melanin, a naturally occurring pigment produced by humans and animals, is the primary determinant of a person's hair, skin and eye color. With regular use, says Henares, Belo Essentials has been proven to effectively control the skin's melanin production "at different levels."

"Admittedly, the brand first rode on the Belo name," Henares says, referring to the Belo Medical Group (BMG), a chain of beauty clinics established and managed by her mother Dr. Vicki Belo. "But it couldn't have grown and lasted this long without

TAKE 2 »



'We're missing our targets'

IS THIS YEAR, IT LOOKS LIKE we'll again be below the market performance we set at our corporate strategy plan that we outlined before the start of this year. This below the target around was true of last year and the year before.

In September of each year we do our annual corporate strategy planning. We allocate three full days for this planning at an out-of-town hotel.

We start by having outside speakers to tell us what to expect about the coming year's PEST (political, economic, social and technological) environment. This is followed by a SWOT analysis and a review of the company's sales and profit performances of the previous years. From this analysis and review, we derive the direction to take for the coming year, and the strategies to bring us to the chosen direction.

But we've been missing our targets for the past six years. Someone told us that he heard you were in a conference any that what something like what we're experiencing happens, it's likely that the strategy planning process is flawed or wrong. Is ours left as what's wrong with what we're doing?

A: That's a difficult question to answer. So, we will answer based solely on your brief and general description of your corporate strategy planning process.

We would be more specific if you were also specific about what happened between the time you strategized in September of the previous year and the end or toward the end of the current year.

MARKETING Rx

Dr. Noel Roberto & Andy Roberto

Benchmarking with Jack

In the particular context of your question, we'd like to answer by benchmarking against a known and acknowledged classic in corporate strategy planning. This is Jack Welch's system of General Electric (GE).

Awarded by Fortune Magazine as "Manager of the Century", Welch's strategy planning by GE has the enviable record of never having missed its target market share, sales and profit numbers.

The elements of Welch strategy planning evolved over his 20-year tenure at GE. They are found in his two books, "Straight from the Gut" (2001) and "Winning" (2005), and in the two books about his leadership at GE, namely, "Jack Welch and the GE Way" by Robert Slater (1998), and "Inside Up: the Inside Story of How Jack Welch Talked GE into Becoming the World's Greatest Company" by Bill Lane (2007).

In its final form, here's the way Jack Welch has developed his GE corporate strategy planning over the. Incidentally, Welch conducts and facilitates the sessions himself. There are four sets of planning sessions in the entire system, and each has its own specific focus.

Every six months

The system's first part is an every Spring and Fall strategy planning for the intermediate term. The purpose here is to take a serious look at each of GE's strategic business units (SBUs) along a three-year time horizon. Why every six months? That's a Jack Welch signature thinking. The stability of the longer term gets less and less unpredictable as the shorter-term unfolds.

Annual strategies

The second part is the annual strategy planning. That happens every January and takes place in a Florida resort, the Boca Raton Resort & Club.

The planning sessions here are detailed in charting of "best practices" and in coming each SBU's coming year's business priorities, each strategic plan ends with a budget.

Welch sets two rules for what he regards as a "good focused budget." The budget must focus on answering two questions: (1) "How can you beat last year's performance?" Or, how can you successfully compete against yourself? (2) "What is your competition doing, and how can you beat them?"

'Implement like hell'

The third and fourth parts are critical to each other because they fall under what Welch regards as the most consequential components of strategy planning. This is "execution" or strategy implementation, on which Welch's attitude says: "Strategy is actually very straightforward. You pick a general direction and implement like hell... Don't waste a lot of time on strategy, if you want to win, then people are less and decisive."

There are two critical components in strategy implementation: (1) people planning and management, and, (2) operations planning and management.

Management retreat

For Welch, planning for people management is a twice a year "retreat." The retreat's focus is on how to maximize empowering his executives to each of GE's SBUs.

The planning sessions therefore revolves and insights into the changing managerial and staff needs for each SBU. The reviews and weighing are directed at enabling each SBU in attaining their market performance targets.

It is here that Welch applies his famous 20-70-10 formula for managing people. He generously rewards and further sharpens via cultured fit investing, his top 20 percent executives and shapes up, and fires the 10 percent bottom performers and laggards. What about the middle 70 percent? Here's Welch's policy and counsel to his SBU heads: "Spend half of your time evaluating and coaching the middle 70 percent and don't get mother distracting your thinking."

Starting sessions in this people planning, Welch relies heavily on his HRD (human resources department).

Welch advised by Fortune magazine is an interview who is a good HR head. Welch quipped: "The best HR type? is pastor and a parrot in the same package."

Finally, the planning for operations is a two-day quarterly event. His focus here is on the initiatives and activities closely related to the agenda set during the annual strategy plan.

Welch also takes the two days in the session where he can identify the company's future leaders as planned from their responses during the sessions to the challenges of change and issues.

Prescriptions

In there's your model for transforming your own strategy planning into a more doable and assessment empowered planning system.

The prescription for the needed transformation are these:

+ Separate the planning sessions for the three-year and the annual, and for the people and the operations necessary for effectively implementing the annual strategy. Don't compress all four into one planning schedule.

+ Schedule their convergence and frequency of each of these four components of the entire strategy planning over different times of the year.

+ Give a specific focus for each planning of the four components, but relate each focus to the attainment of the desired future priorities of the annual strategy plan.

Keep your questions coming. Send them to us at drnoelmarket@gmail.com or Marites Dañguilan@yahoo.net. God bless!

As economy thrives, China sees golden age of weddings

BEIJING—SHENG SUHAO AND FANG CHUQING said "I do" to each other in the same month that they said "we do" to their real estate agent.

China is in the midst of a golden age of weddings, a boom for businesses from photo studios to global platinum miners. Yet nowhere is the economic impact so potentially profound as in the bursting bridal.

A cloud of newlyweds such as Sheng and Fan buying their first homes would help power China's property sales for years, even as some investors fear that prices are already in dangerous bubble territory.

"My husband and I preferred to have our own home rather than rent one in advance, because marriage stands for a new start, and we are building a family now," Meng said, sitting in their tidy studio apartment.

The story may seem perfectly normal, even universal, at first glance. What makes it more powerful is that Meng and Fan are part of a demographic bulge of people in their 20s who will be of prime marrying age between now and 2015.

A WOMAN looks in a mirror as she holds a gold earring in Beijing. China is in the midst of a golden age of weddings, a boon for businesses from photo studios to jewelry stores. REUTERS

Baby boomers' babies

As these newlyweds shell out for their first homes, the property market will enjoy a boom of solid demand. Analysts estimate such couples would snap up as much as 455 million square meters of housing every year, or roughly 36 percent of all that is under construction at present.

Looking west from Meng and Sun's window, clusters of new apartment buildings fill the skyline. To the east lies a flat, gray landscape of single-story dwellings that is slowly being swallowed by high-rises.

"The apartments here are fairly small. They're a perfect fit for young couples," Meng said, estimating that these quarters of low neighbors were around the age of 30.

These are the children of China's baby boomers, a demographic ripple of four of the country's population surge in the 1950s and 1960s.

They would have been even more numerous had Beijing not launched its one-child policy in the late 1970s to cap family size, but they are still a huge group than those immediately younger and older than them.

This is news to the entrepreneurial population can't help but have shaped their consumption habits. Showered with attention and gifts all their lives, this generation of only children keep their purse strings loose, unlike their parents.

"They have all grown up since 2002, during 30 years of fast-paced growth, so they don't feel the same need for precautionary savings as their parents," Ning Dajiang, an economist with China International Capital Corp., said.

Weddings are often a ready outlet for spending.

But only are more people getting married, more of those getting married are choosing to have weddings—and lavish ones at that. The wedding industry is worth about 400 billion yuan a year, roughly a 2.5 percent share of the (not to gross domestic product), according to official estimates.

Big business

The Global Wedding Mall in the heart of Beijing offers three floors of dress makers, jewelry merchants and photo studios.

"A bride usually buys two gowns: a white one in the Western style, used for the procession and vows, and a traditional Chinese one used for the banquet," said Ying Ji, a salesperson at a dress shop in the mall.

Diamonds are also hot. Chen Shi's family began crafting diamond rings at home for a niche market a decade ago. Now they run a shop, Shing Jewelry, selling Chinese-style brands.

And brides have taken to platinum jewelry because the white metal matches their white gowns. Its place in Chinese weddings has helped double global demand for platinum this year despite a sharp fall in use by the hobbled auto industry, according to precious metals refiner Johnson Matthey.

The wedding boom has not escaped the government's notice.

The state-run China Association of Social Workers established the Wedding Industry Committee in 2003 to gather data and set standards.

The number of weddings, about 10 million in 2008, is increasing by 10 percent a year, while spending is rising 20 percent, according to Ou Kunming, the committee chief.

No crisis

"The global financial crisis hit a lot of industries: exporters, banks, insurance. But not only was the wedding industry not affected, it has had even stronger growth over the past year," Ou said.

According to surveys of the China Index Research Institute, three-quarters of first-time home buyers are below the age of 35. But a surge in housing values, up 70 percent by value in the year to October—is clearly about more than just newlyweds.

The economy is awash in cash after banks issued an unprecedented flood of loans to help combat the financial crisis. With few investment channels in China, property is dazzling.

"The high prices are largely dictated by investors," said Yan Linbin, an economist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. "Modeling school home buying is only part of the demand."

Yet it is an important part, Ding of CI. CC. agrees. So much so that the demographic implications could flatter and, even, threaten

There's wealth in the wellness trade

From page B2-4

about the industry. The Department of Health, under the presiding of the Spa functions, is currently reviewing this law.

Since the spa industry is part of the wellness industries, spa therapists should be considered healthcare workers in the hospitality industry. Unfortunately, the industry has to battle with wrong perceptions of it being part of the illicit sex trade. This has been due to the presence of massage parlors and sauna baths that serve as fronts for prostitution.

The most pressing issue therefore is controlling the use of the word "spa" to protect professionally run facilities.

This requires the involvement of the Department of Local Governments, which must regulate the use of the name "spa" and require businesses to meet specific criteria.

It will also require careful monitoring of the spa businesses by both private and public sectors to ensure that the spas do not carry on illicit activities.

By doing so, the Philippine spa and wellness industry will get itself on its way to sound growth.

The author is founder and co-owner of Nature's Spa Hilltop in Cavite. She is also the founding and current president of the Philippine Wellness and Spa Association, formerly Spa Association of the Philippines.)

CREDIBLE networks the persona of beauty to be found in her line of skin care products

Skin care is her ...

From page B2-1

winning over satisfied customers."

Heritage

Unlike most of its competitors, the brand has a heritage that dates back to the time her mother opened the very first BMG clinic 28 years ago, Hosanna adds.

Bebe, a practitioner herself, knows what the market wants and how to best answer them.

"We may be just three years old," says Hosanna, "but the planning started some five years before we even thought of starting the business."

Every time Hosanna, now 26, and Bebe did the groceries back when the former was still in high school, people would invariably ask her mother where she would launch her next line of cheaper, more accessible beauty products for average wage earners.

At the same time, recalls Hosanna, Bebe would go through various beauty products displayed on the supermarket's shelves and shrink in horror at the dozens to hours her own line of so-called "boutique" luxury products were due.

Running a chain of beauty clinics that gradually expanded to include branches in Alabang, Makati, Quezon City and even Cebu made it impossible for Bebe to open a separate company and run, but dream into reality several years later.

The training years of the pixies was completed when Hosanna, a business graduate from Ateneo, joined the family enterprise by helping her mother establish and oversee their company.

"I really find fulfillment in business," says Hosanna, who, upon her mother's request, once gave medicine a try. "I grew up loving exposed roof. Business was a constant topic at home—from my vacant hours after school up to the time we have dinners. I was still in pre-med when I finally realized and accepted the fact that medicine isn't for me."

Beauty junkie

But this hasn't hindered her from running a company composed of a seasoned team of professionals from various fields. She first learned the ropes of the beauty business by training for a year at BMG before embarking on her mother's dream project.

Hosanna is careful, however, not to confuse the market by overselling a line of products clearly meant for the masses. Regular users of Bebe Essentials are hooked to six months, but they're no way as demanding—and costly—as the ones they would see and experience after a visit or two to a BMG clinic.

"I'd like to believe that Bebe Essentials is more for maintenance," says Hosanna. "Through constant use, I can assure people that they do work."

That's why BMG, apart from imported and in-house products dispensed by its clinics, doesn't carry Bebe Essentials. Instead, the pricey plucking beauty junkie can avail on the premises of finer, softer skin to choose or bedde by swinging in the nearest drugstore or supermarket.

Globe dealership turns into virtual cash network

By Paolo G. Montecillo

WANT TO MAKE DEposits into your bank accounts without actually dealing with a bank? How about paying bills, or cashing in the money your mother, father, brother or sister sent you from abroad by simply taking a few steps out of your home door?

These things, which used to be impossible unless you lived right in the center of the Makati Central Business District, could soon be the norm for the rest of the populace.

This is the idea behind GCash Teleserve Inc.'s plan to create the country's largest financial services network with the help of its 35,000 vendors.

GCash will turn its sub-dealers, or vendors who distribute products like prepaid credits or SIM cards to be sold to consumers, into cash-in and cash-out points for the company's electronic money system. GCash is the brainchild of Globe Telecom Inc.

Globe president and chief executive officer Ernesto Ortiz said that would help bring retail financial services to poor areas or "the bottom of the pyramid," which are outside the reach of traditional institutions.

"Possibly this will be the most pervasive cash-in and cash-out network in the country. There are like maybe 30,000," Ortiz told reporters last Thursday.

Globe subsidiaries can engage from your nearby convenience stores, mall kiosks that sell prepaid credits, to the sari-sari stores you see on every street corner.

The GCash service, which is offered by Globe through subsidiary G-Xchange Inc., allows subscribers to make financial transactions such as making purchases, withdrawals and deposits, using mobile phones.

To avail of these services, subscribers will have to create GCash accounts by registering their mobile phone numbers. The subscribers then given a "virtual wallet" which is where the money is stored.

To put money in, subscribers will have to go to so-called cash-in points. The money stored in the wallets may then be used in transactions by using the phone or transfer the money from one wallet to another.

Money in the wallet may also be sent to bank accounts of subscribers, which may be linked to a GCash account as an option.

The amounts in these wallets may also be monitored by going to a cash-out point, where the virtual credits are converted into cash.

Cash-in, cash-out points

With the plan to use subdealers as cash-in and cash-out points, Globe plans to exponentially triple the reach of the country's banks.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) data show that, as of the end of March this year, there were only 7,809 ATMs in the country.

According to Co, GCash is now being used to pay bills and forward remittances. It even serves as payrolls of some big employers.

The advantage of using GCash is, a bank branch need not be physically there for a client to avail of its services. And because of this, the rates for using the same services are reduced drastically.

For instance, while fees for sending remittances via wire transfer services can reach as much as 10 percent of the amount sent, GCash can bring charges down to around two percent.

That's money instantly saved, which can now be used for more important things like tuition, rice, or that lovely pair of shoes you've been eyeing for months.

No collateral

GCash may also eventually be used to extend microfinance loans. Borrowers may also repay their credits using GCash, Co said.

In fact, using electronic money for microfinance activities has been one of the most popular GCash applications.

Lending small amounts to a farmer with less than a hectare of land to till is not the same as taking out 10-year mortgages from banks.

Microfinance means relatively small amounts are lent to borrowers. The arrears are collected, so lenders tend to want to be repaid rather quickly. That means a few days, and in several installments too. Without the convenience of electronic transactions, this would mean visits to borrowers on a near-daily basis.

This is not only tiring for whoever has to do the collecting, it is also time-consuming. And, as we all know, time equals money.

So curing this logistical nightmare out of the equation, incidents need not knock on borrowers' doors every chance they get. Payments can simply be sent from G-wallet to G-wallet.

This also means lower costs, which may mean lower interest rates.

In short, no one gets the short end of the stick.

Viral tool

Microfinance has been tagged by most international institutions, including the World Bank, as a viral tool for poverty alleviation since it provides a boost to budding entrepreneurs in need of funds and allow them to turn their ideas into healthy profits.

"This will likely be the most pervasive financial operation in the country, coupled with the existing network of Globe stores and affiliated pawnshops and other stores," which double as cash-in and cash-out points, Co said.

With the exception of some rural locations, most financial institutions are concentrated in urban areas like Metro Manila and Cebu.

This is where GCash gets to fill the void. Aside from bringing down costs and offering absolute convenience to those who use it, GCash will be present in areas where financial services are often absent.

The extensive reach of GCash will be vital for a country where about a third of the population is poor.

According to Co, telecommunications have always been at the forefront of transforming the Philippine countryside.

Transformation

"[With cheap and reliable] mobile telephony services, we provided the first phase of transformation for the people at the bottom of the pyramid. We are now ... [at] the second level of transformation by enabling mobile broadband accessible to everyone," Co said.

"Our third phase of transformation is using financial services. Today, the bottom of the pyramid is excluded, and we're hoping we can include them with our mobile money transfer system," he said.

Despite being the affiliate of one of the country's biggest banks—the 156 year-old Bank of the Philippine Islands—GCash hopes to provide services that will benefit not only its principals.

Globe has partnered with over 50 banks to serve 120,000 GCash subscribers. The volume of transactions has also reportedly reached P6 billion.

"This is open to all banks," Co said of Globe's services.

Sunshine, sewage to power cities of the future

LILLE, FRANCE—"THESE ARE the three giant mounds of Lille."

Amid the hum of machinery and warm odor of pumping autumn leaves, official Pierre Hinnebojort is explaining how clever giant fermenters can convert household food waste, trimmings from parks and gardens and slops from school and hospital canteens into enough methane gas to power almost a third of the buses in the French city.

"The process is exactly the same as in the stomach of a cow," he said, gesturing to...wait three biodigesters that each hold 20,000 cubic metres of bubbling liquified waste.

"The objective is to fuel 100 of Lille's buses on this biogas, out of a total fleet of 350," Hinnebojort, head of the city's urban waste research and development, told Reuters.

From San Francisco to Malmo, Sweden, cities around the globe are preparing for a new imperative: to accommodate the mass of world population growth and thrive, without further accelerating the release of carbon dioxide that threatens their existence.

Unsold sandwiches

Smarting, rich countries and a shrinking population help widen the range of options for places like San Francisco—the first city to make it a crime not to compost food and waste in any bin, in a bid to cut landfill not to zero.

Plenty of money on top of abundant sun are allowing Abu Dhabi to showcase a futuristic eco-city. Masdar City is a vision of solar panels powering jobless lanes and trams and feeding desalinated water to children and its verdant palms.

But for many cities, particularly older cement in plentiful climates, the reality will be more like Lille—dwelling energy from the movement of citizens, the waste from restaurants and the mountains of unsold sandwiches left in supermarkets at the end of each week.

It will require myriad different approaches in which to power society's impact on the planet.

Here comes the sun

Cities in France, Sweden, Australia and the United States are looking at an easy mix of energy sources, and their choices prove that what is good in an urbanite environmental literature is not necessarily what works on the ground.

In Australia, the government plans seven pioneering "Solar Cities" and is putting A$1.5 billion into three-quarters of solar power projects driven by the sun.

As solar power seats have fallen due to economies of scale, an initially subsidized power source is becoming viable in some places.

"In countries like Spain, southern Italy and Greece, the cost of energy from solar is already so well seen by, at parity with the cost of electricity from the grid," said Winfried Hoffmann, president of the European Photovoltaic Industry Association.

Incremental gains

Bogus—the fact that will power some Lille buses—is actually an ancient energy source. It captured the attention of 12th century adventurer Ibiass Ibin in China, where he noted coastal pots of sewage stored to generate energy, and it earned a mention by 17th-century writer Daniel Defoe.

Already, cities such as Malmo, Sweden, are waste to heat and power buildings. In Malmo, 50 percent of heat is produced from its 550,000 tons of waste a year—a level that could be replicated in most north European cities, said Rikard Bengtsson, project manager at E.ON Sverige, which developed Malmo's heat and power system.

"Waste is an interesting fuel due to the fact that you don't have to pay for it," said Bengtsson. "You get paid to take care of it." Reuters

Panasonic
ideas for life
eco ideas
ENVIO Inverter Technology
SAVE ENERGY BY UP TO 50% WITH THE INVERTER TECHNOLOGY
• Advance F-ion Air Purifying System (With Built-in Air Purifier)
• New Patrol Sensor • Odor-Removing Function
Eco-Friendly Features
Up to 50% Less Power Consumption using Inverter Technology vs. non-Inverter models
New HFC Refrigerant (R410A) does not damage the ozone layer
INVERTER technology
envio
www.panasonic.com.ph

BUSINESS *Friday*

There's wealth in the wellness trade

By Catherine Brillantes Tarvil
Contributor

DESPITE THE GLOBAL SLOWDOWN, reports from the Global Spa Summit 2009 say that while the industry slowed down in 2008, it is expected to recover in 2010 and grow aggressively in 2011 onwards.

This growth is primarily rooted in the belief that spas or wellness centers are essential to health and well-being.

In the Philippines, many hotel and resort operators have invested or have plans to invest in spas, knowing that such amenities are something that they cannot do without.

Studies have also shown that travelers searching the Internet for a place to stay regard the presence of a spa as the deciding factor.

Several new hotels and resorts in the Philippines have already put up such facilities, including the new Chi Spa at the Shangri-La Hotel and Resorts in Boracay, the Quan Spa of the new Marriott Hotel, the Manila Hotel Spa of the newly renovated Manila Hotel, and the Carumba Spa of the Imperial Hotel in Cebu.

The Banyan Tree chain is investing in a multimillion-peso resort in Palawan and will certainly include a spa as an amenity.

WELLNESS centers have become essential facilities that no hotel or resort can do without.

Making a profit

Anyone interested in opening a spa may have options to choose from.

An investor may choose to set up a day spa. If this facility is going to be part of a resort or hotel, you may have an operator run the spa under a concession agreement, or enter into a joint venture with a spa management company.

Many would-be day spa owners fall in love with the glamour of the business, believing that owning a spa is the ticket to free massages all day long. But the reality is far from it: running a spa is hard work requiring a combination of creative, technical, financial and business skills.

It is wise to work with a credible spa consultant from the very beginning to save on time and money, as many costly mistakes may be made from wrong decisions concerning the spa's design, size, interior and product assumptions.

Many spas are designed by architects and interior designers who have no knowledge of a spa's operations, resulting in poorly planned and expensive structures...not many rooms, not enough "back of house" facilities, too many non-revenue generating areas.

Spa design requires planning what is called the "spa journey" which is what clients take for a relaxing and revitalizing experience.

Working with a spa consultant, or enrolling in a course on "How to set up a spa" (conducted quarterly by Spa Professionals International Development Center; www.spaprofessionals.net) can be a wise decision, saving investors a lot of money.

Hotel or resort owners can also opt to work with spa management companies or concessionaires to handle their facilities. It is necessary however to work with credible spa operators, as a well-run spa would bring in added revenues and enhance the hotel's reputation, while poor or shoddy spa service could tarnish the name of the establishment.

This option is best for resort or hotel owners so that they can focus on running their establishments.

Ensuring a viable industry

The Philippines is a perfect host for the spa and wellness industry with its rich healing traditions, beautiful natural resources, breathtaking locations, various healing plants and herbs, innate hospitality of Filipinos and, most of all, its caring and compassionate health workers.

The private sector, through the Spa Association of the Philippines, has been working very closely with various government offices like the departments of Trade, Tourism and Health to address various issues affecting the industry.

The spa industry is supported primarily by the Department of Tourism, which formed the Spa Association of the Philippines in 2003, and has been promoting the Philippine Hilot Massage aggressively in the international market.

The DOT has a spa accreditation process in place and has worked with the Spa Association to develop the criteria. The Department of Trade is also looking to standardize the Philippine Hilot protocol.

The industry is regulated by the Department of Health, under the Sanitary Code that dates back to the 1950s. Under the Code, massage therapists have to undergo monthly physical exams to prove that they are not carriers of sexually-transmitted diseases.

This practice is degrading to the therapists and sends a wrong signal

TARNISHED.

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

Contributing Editors: Appie Abarca-Sudhoff, Joni Epperson and Ria Francisco-Prieto

Mobile Alert: Text INQCRITIC to 2467 | Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle | E-mail: lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

PURPLE: An upper long dress by Vivo Versa with matching purple shoes by Jaylin

How the swim champ pulls off a 'mom glam'

IRENE: Marcos dowager as Ray-Ayr

Irene's festive Filipiniana, . . .

By Larry Laviste
Contributor

FOR THE LONGEST CHRISTmas season in the world, which is in the Philippines, Manila's high-society ladies rapped various styles to go glamorous for chilly evenings.

As Irene Marcos-Araneta's Ray-Ayr, she

(MORE'S C2)

AT THE BAYANI celebration were Liza Araneta-Marcos, Marites Jacinto, Chito and Monique Villaraza in abel Iloco.

AT YNLU! watch launch were Princess Hidalgo, jeweler Anita Chan and Michele Sison.

Irene's festive Filipiniana, Wynn Wynn's bible-inspired bibelots, Anita's Italian watches

SOFIA Blasdo holds a Cebuano clutch.

AT ZOOM'S monument shirt dress and extravagant ballet flats

LIZZIE Zobel's hair goes shoulder-length.

REA Zobel p's classic tiered pagoboy

AT WYNN WYNN ONG'S Fiona jewelry launch were Michelle Tedjangco, Martin Kasparo Prada and Helen Pineda.

TIM TAM Ong wearing her own jewelry and, below, her clutch bag in guipure lace

BEAUTIful Helen Calzado

IRENE Herrera-Araneta in Pepito Albert's one-shoul abel Iloco maxi dress

From page C1

Ilocano barrio fiesta traditionally celebrated in December, women wear Filipiniana, as requested by the hostess.

In a starched black-and-white abel Iloco maxi dress by Pepito Albert, Irene greeted guests.

Easily a standout was the radiant Marites Cardenas Zobel, in Gilli's navy blue maxi dress by Oscar de la Renta.

Rosanna Santos Jusef was served by master chefs Glenda Barretto and Claude Tayag.

Ruben Mendiola was with girls Gianne and Iman Cruz. With Lisa Araneta-Marcos, they applauded heartily the performances of the Madrigal Singers and the Bayanihan Dance Troupe.

Outside the Rockwell Tent, Joyce Pierovich, Michael Salcedo and Louie Cruz enjoyed the Ilocano native treats, t'nalots, sinanes and sorobes.

All proceeds of the music fair went to the Ilianen Ilocos Norte.

In the fountain area was the launch by promdoner jeweler Anita Chan of her latest line of Yuli Watches from Italy.

Michele Sison's gang of A-list fashionistas snapped up the interesting and beautiful timepieces.

Chan said the line is available at her Ilustre Shangri-La Plaza shop and Rockwell boutique.

At Rikky Toledo and Chito Miranda's Filma in Greenhill 2, Wynn Wynn Ong's Old Testament-inspired bibelots, earrings, sinee bracelets and neck pieces were launched.

Inspired by the biblical queen Sheba, as well as Egyptian mythology and ancient Babylon, the eye-catchand unisex wear was paired by four beautiful Zobel ladies—Rea R., Lizzie, Ritz and Sophia.

Jun Ang Tan, Ricky Poncadas, Alvin Lim and Hecky Pineda swapped jokes.

Since the dress code seemed to be laid-back black, vivacious Marites Prada Marjore shone in a multicolored dance dress.

Guests hopped over to Manila Peninsula for the opening of Incolin.

STUNNING Ching Cruz wears her Indian Yuli watch.

How the swim champ pulls off a 'mom glam'

Her wardrobe should take her to all her kids' needs and activities –from breastfeeding to tennis lessons

PURPLE long-sleeved pinkwith hidden pleats, and black cutaway tab straight-cut pants by Banana Republic with cross-bag pumps shown by Jumbo

THERE IS MORE TO CHRISTINE Anoth Sandejas than her head-turning looks.

At age 5, she was already in swimming competitions. Her skill and speed propelled her to international meets by the time she was 11. Christie reigned in swimming, setting a Philippine record in 13.

At the height of her swimming career, she held 10 records in the South- and Asia games in Manila, Singapore, Thailand, India and Korea. At 16, she was a member of the team that competed in the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984.

But fast was the results of practices, practice and more practice. She gives her parents credit for her success, as they were always by her side, taking her to her 4:30 a.m. daily practices, putting her pools, and tipping her on, that there was no need to be nervous if you were confident of your abilities.

Christine moved to the US for college, attending at Emerson College in Ohio, where she continued to swim. She graduated with a degree in International Studies, while likewise her area of concentration. (She speaks and writes French).

Because of her background in sports, she was tapped to cover the sports events in the Olympics in 1988 and 1996. There she moved on to hosting TV shows.

Typical week

Now, that she is married to Paco Sandejas, and with kids, Christine's typical week starts at 6:45 a.m., when she feeds her 9-month-old boy. She then takes her four others to school at 8:45, and commutes to work till 5, alternating yoga and tennis.

Her afternoons are full as she takes the kids to tennis, piano, violin or reading classes. It is important to her that her kids have discipline and a sense of responsibility so her policy is that they do homework first and that they have to be in bed by 9 p.m.

Aside from her duties as mother and wife, she tapes for "Full time Mom," twice a week and does looking to endorsement jobs.

Comfort is key in her wardrobe choices, since she has a lot of activities with her kids. At this time, her clothes also must make it easy for her to breastfeed. An easy wardrobe consists of a maternity polo with hooding sweaters, or blazer with flare skirt. She pairs jeans with a soft, layered top to show off her strong shoulders. To complement her effortless simple and uncomplicated style, she favors big necklaces.

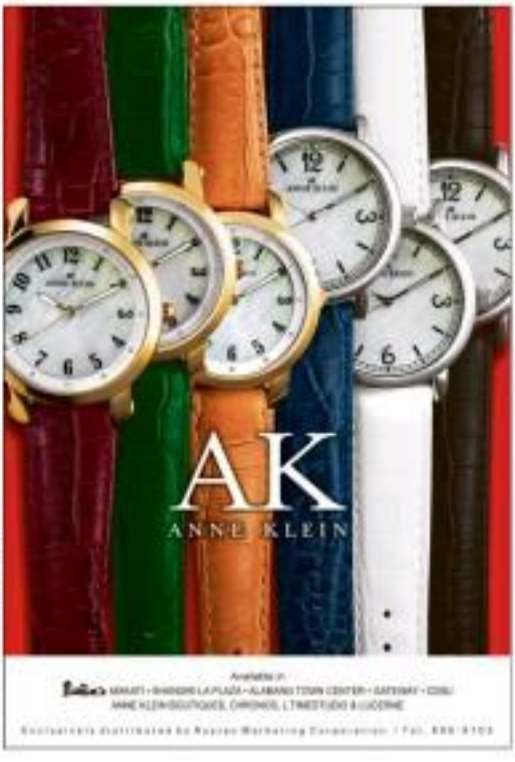
One can always tell true femininity when a woman sports tailored and mannish cuts and yet exudes some sexiness — like Christine does.

PURPLE gathered sleeve French knit top by Vivi Versa, and a black jacket with zippers detail by Marks and Spencer with matching black asymmetric ruffles skirt by DKNY, and black shoes by Jumbo

PURPLE long-sleeved pinkwith hidden pleats, and black cutaway tab straight-cut pants by Banana Republic with cross-bag pumps shown by Jumbo

SANDEJAS uses confidence to pair with stylish minimalist clothes.

BLACK on-spay chiffon top by Vivi Versa with cross-bag tapered dress pants by Marks and Spencer, and black shoes by Jumbo



LIFESTYLE *Fashion&Beauty*

The search is on for the world's 'greenest' salons

A LOOK from Davines' recent crush party in Venice, Italy, for the hair care brand's annual World Wide Hair Tour event. —contrib

Davines' Premier Eco-Salon Contest echoes the company's philosophy of 'sustainable beauty'

Text and photos by Cleche V. Moral

HAVE YOU EVER WONdered if the hair salon you frequent is eco-friendly?

Probably not. As long as you're stepping out of there feeling good and looking better, that's all that matters. Even for the most upscale local salons, being ecologically upright must be the least of their concerns.

An Italian hair care company is challenging salons the world over to compete in the Davines Premier Eco-Salon Contest, a tilt that echoes the company's philosophy of "sustainable beauty." It was announced at the recent World Wide Hair Tour 2009 in Venice, Italy.

WWHT is Davines' annual event that gathers stylists and salon professionals from around the world to envision and to compete in the World Style Canvas. This year, the Philippines qualified for the second time in the global competition.

The "eco-friendly" doing may be the biggest trend since The Rachel—Jennifer Aniston's much-copied hairstyle on "Friends," as if you didn't know—and has become the byword of every company or organization that either truthfully has a conscience or is just on the bandwagon.

But frankly-caused flyer has been espousing sustainable beauty from its inception, long before it became chic to do so.

Zero impact

In all its practices, Davines' ultimate goal is zero impact on the environment. It has partnered with the organization LifeGate, which supplies its factory with renewable energy. To offset carbon dioxide emissions in production, it has committed to LifeGate's reforestation projects.

Salons the world over can do their share by adopting practical steps, according to Davines, which has eco-tips on its website (www.davines.com). These are simple steps such as keeping plants inside the salon to compensate for CO2 emissions in the day-to-day operations.

The company believes these practices can help influence salon customers to follow suit, and inspire other businesses.

Each zero-impact stylist is equal to 2,000 sq m of trees/year, enough to counteract 1,500 kg of CO2 emissions annually. The forest-zero costs participating salons roughly 100 euros/stylist, an insignificant amount for one of the most consistently high-revenue businesses.

(Contest deadline is Feb. 15, 2010, and the winning salons will receive free air and land transfers to WWHT 2010 in Berlin. For

THE SUNDAY D2

The search is on for the world's 'greenest' salons

From page D1

inquirer, e-mail [bizzen@inquirer.n.]

"When I first met Bernard (marketing director), I thought, this guy is an inspiration. And that's what we need in the industry, because we want to inspire, energize and share a vision," says Franck Riviere, who worked with a beauty giant until recently. He's now Bernard Levitan's global director for hair care division for Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Unlike conglomerates, "Environ isn't in heavy on market research. It's heavier on creation," he adds. "Why not? They say, 'When we're old, deaf and blind, we'll need market research. Right now, we're connected and in touch. We can design in a creative process that will inspire people."

Family business

Born in 1963 in Roma, Italy, Environ started out creating beauty products for high-end couture firms. The Redken franchise which established the firm, didn't begin creating hair care products for their own brand until 1996.

The family's theme has always been "respect for the environment and customer safety by using only high-grade natural ingredients." Packaging is 40 percent less plastic, and every thing is still made in the Portia factory, using the purest raw materials from the Mediterranean.

The salon-formulated brand of color, hair care and skincare is now available in 68 countries, including the Philippines, where Environ is distributed by Canadian Revelia Intimate Accessories Inc. (RAMIL CHUA)

In Asia, where the industry is dominated by multinational beauty giants, Riviere says the family-owned Environ isn't "out on getting head to head. It's happy where it is and how customers perceive it."

"Our vision isn't to be the biggest but to be the most advanced," maybe it's a bit romantic, but it's in line with the artistic approach. Like a painter or a real artist who doesn't paint to become the richest, but to follow his inspiration and vision. People are coming to us more because they feel this connection."

In Venice in October, the people did come—hundreds of them, salon professionals, at the Palazzo del Cinema in Lido, just across the Grand Canal, where the annual Venice Film Festival is held. Fittingly, the WWST this year coincided with the

CLAVINES.com Franck Riviere

DAVID Charlton (left) Riviere RP representative Anthony Briano, a stylist with Charlton's David's Salon chain.

CROWD Fans of a Filipino model Jean Licelle Santos sports Anthony Briano's look.

CRAFTSMEN Armand Valenzia, Patricia Ingalo and Marne Co

Venice Biennale, the global cultural institution that celebrates various art disciplines in several weeks of exhibitions.

World influences

While Environ is proud of its so-called Italian perspective in art and fashion, its approach in style trends has been unique in that it seeks and encourages influences from all its markets overseas, says the World Style Contest.

For the second time, the country United a consistent, Anthony Briano of Beverly Hills. In him, whose look was easily a crowd favorite, was among the 12 finalists in the Asia-Pacific contest, won this year by Canada. In 2007, Grand Runner of Emphasis Artico was for the title in Barcelona.

The competition was presented by visual presentations by world-renowned stylists who included Tim Hartley Conners creative director of Vidal Sassoon in the UK, who showed a look or two that called to mind the pop star Lady Gaga.

It's the kind of creativity and optimism that seems to echo the state of the beauty industry unscathed and undeterred by the global crisis.

"It's a very resilient industry," confirms Riviere. "The lipstick companies isn't a myth," he adds, referring to economists that, even when the economy is in the gutter, a woman will always console herself with a tube of lipstick.

It's the same in the Philippines, according to a beauty executive, who requested anonymity. "Filipinas have misplaced priorities. Even if it's their last buck, they'll go to the salon for a salon."

"The New York Times reported that cosmetics sales went up 40 percent in 2008, though the economy was down," Riviere adds. "The beauty industry is a very good place to be."

MODERN Gaga styles à la Lady Gaga by top UK stylist Tim Hartley

UPSWEPT 'do by American stylist Frank Riviere

STYLES for curly and straight hair by Dutch duo Rinnie Dorsers and Brian Suhr

Welcome home, kababayan!
Filinvest honors OFWs and balikbayans with Christmas treat.

Christmas is just around the corner. At isa lang ang ibig sabihin nito para kay Juan dela Cruz – panahon ng pagsasama-sama ng buong pamilya. Iyan na't inaasahan ang pag-uwi ng mga kapamilya nating balikbayan at OFWs mula sa iba't ibang parte ng mundo.

Kasama ng mga pasalubong at regalo, iba ng sinag ngs kababayan ang panaginip na makapiling ang kanilang mga mahal sa buhay. Hindi madali ang mapalayo sa pamilya, pero tama rin ng kasnal. Pinoy na nangangarap na matagyan ng kaginhawaan ang kanyang pamilya.

Sakalin ang Filinvest sa lahat ng mga kababayan nating OFWs na nakikipagsapalaran abroad, gayundin sa mga balikbayan na sumugal at nagsipagumpay sa ibang bansa. Bilang pagsisibong sa iyong pagbabalik, may panawahong handog ang Filinvest para sa iyo, kababayan!

Hatid namin ang Filinvest Perks Card. Sa pamamagitan nito, may exciting freebies at discounts na naghihintay sa mga balikbayan at OFWs sa participating stores and merchants sa Festival Supermall, Alabang. At hindi lang yan, may chance ka pang manalo ng up to one million pesos sa special design Navarida event sa Festival Supermall at SM Megamall on December 11, 2009!

Hatid lang ang paghuba ng Filinvest Perks Card. Simply present your passport at Filinvest booth sa Duty Free Philippines, Parañaque from November 1 to December 31, 2009. Sagutan ang registration form, at makukuha mo na ang Christmas treat ng Filinvest para sa yo!

Ang Filinvest Perks Card ay aming paraan para sabihin ang lahat ng iyong pagsisikap para matupad ang pangarap mo para sa iyong pamilya. Kaakibat ng lahat Pilipinong nangangarap ang Filinvest, na patuloy sa tumutulong sa bawat Pilipino na matuklasan ito ang pangarap ng sa sariling buhay at magandang buhay para sa pamilya.

In more than 40 years, Filinvest has developed more than 2,000 hectares of land para matupad ang pangarap ng higit sa 100,000 families across the country na maghanap ng sariling bahay.

Whatever your dreams – be it a first home, a heritage to pass on to future generations, or a premium lifestyle – alokapin ng Filinvest na tuparin ito. With its core brands Future Homes, Filinvest Legacy, and Filinvest Premiere, abot-kamay na ang bahay at magandang buhay na hanged mo.

Makikinas ang Filinvest sa lahat ng balikbayan at OFWs na patuloy na nangangarap at naghihirap para sa pamilyang Pilipino. Sa Filinvest, may kasuparan ang mga pangarap mo.

Layer pieces and go personal

FOR ITS HOLIDAY COLLECTION, PENSHOPPE FOCUSES on smart pieces that are as versatile as they are fashionable, giving the wearer chances for personal styling.

Instead of dictating what to wear, the brand challenges everyone to formulate his/her own personal style through bases and layering pieces.

Plaid, checks, and gingham remain key styles for the season.

Penshoppe provides styling freedom with bomber jackets, boyfriend-fit cardigans, shaper-y henley and vests.

Penshoppe's statement is clear: Less is, indeed, more.

Gifts of Joy

This Holiday Season, spread love, share happiness and add sparkle with these wonderful gift ideas.

Unimart & Makati Supermart
December 25 and January 1 (closed)
Cash&Carry
12nn to 8pm on Dec. 25 & Jan. 1 (open)

THE CHAIN MARTS!
SHOPPE VALUE STORES
Makati Supermart
Cash & carry
Unimart

Join us for all the wonders of Hong Kong WinterFest that runs from now to Jan. 3, 2010.

Be dazzled by the enchanting Christmas lights, beautiful carols and all the exciting events. Indulge in tremendous shopping delights and festive treats. Enjoy the spectacular pyrotechnic display at the biggest harbourside countdown party on New Year's Eve. Visit www.DiscoverHongKong.com for more information.

Welcome to new Ocean Park. Make world-famous Ocean Park your must-visit attraction for all the great fun in the holiday! Don't miss the Park's newest attractions including Amazing Asian Animals, where you can discover some of Asia's most precious giant pandas and red pandas. Experience a fantastic deep sea journey on the Ocean Express in 3 minutes. From Dec. 12 to Jan. 3 you will be enchanted with a blend of illusions and entertainments including a world class ice skating show and a snowy tubing ride. Visit www.OceanPark.com.hk for more information.

Cebu Pacific Fun Tour Packages:

For as low as ₱8,764* via Clark
- Lowest Round Trip Go Fares
- 3 Days 2 Nights accommodation at Kowloon Side Hotel
- One day Ocean Park Tour

For as low as ₱9,764* via Manila
- Lowest Round Trip Go Fares
- 3 Days 2 Nights accommodation at Kowloon Side Hotel
- One day Ocean Park Tour

For as low as ₱10,764* via Cebu
- Lowest Round Trip Go Fares
- 3 Days 2 Nights accommodation at Kowloon Side Hotel
- One day Ocean Park Tour

*Just add ₱944 to the above rates for inclusion of round trip airport transfer

Rates are valid until Mar. 31, 2010, subject to availability and are exclusive of government fees and taxes. Rates are based on twin sharing. Terms and conditions apply. To book, log on to FUNTOURS at www.cebupacificair.com or call (+63-2) 70-30-888 in Manila, (+63-32) 238-88-88 in Cebu and (+63-82) 224-8961 to 65 in Davao. Other Hong Kong and Ocean Park packages are also available in the travel agencies nearest you.

BROTHERS BURGER
Burgers By Design
www.brothersburger.com.ph
NOW OPEN!
Space 3A01 Solenad Nuvali Retail Center, Sta. Rosa, Laguna
solenad
NUVALI

Holiday gift sets

Vanity Basket

Elizabeth Arden presents its Holiday Gift Set collection. The collection is made up of reasonably priced premium-packed beauty, body and skin-care items. Elizabeth products are all made from natural ingredients, 100-percent allergy-tested and suitable for Asian skin.

Anti-aging makeup

Elizabeth Arden offers the Ceramide Make-up Collection. The collection includes Ceramide Skin Smoothing Concealer, Ceramide Cream Blush and Ceramide Plump Perfect Lipstick. The Ceramide Makeup Collection softens the appearance of fine lines, smoothens

inspired fashions and wears cool skin tone for a younger, more luminous look this season. Elizabeth Arden Ceramide Color Story is exclusively distributed by Fashion Marketing Corporation and is available at Forever's Makati, Rustan's Shangri-La, Rustan's Alabang Town Center, Wet 'n wild's 888 Mall of Asia, Robinson's Ermita and Landmark Trinoma.

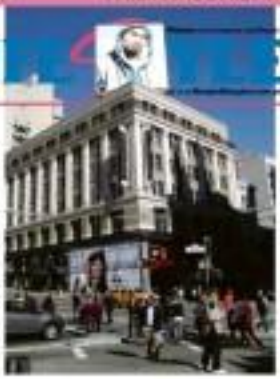
sunglass hut
THE FIRST PREMIUM SUNGLASS RETAILER IN THE PHILIPPINES

STORE LOCATIONS
SB Newport Blvd, Newport City
Rustan's Makati
Rustan's Department Store
Ayala Avenue, Makati City

Rustan's

Lifestyle

Fashion & Beauty



PACQUIAO IN SAN FRANCISCO SKYLINE

MANNY Pacquiao, holder of seven world boxing titles and sporting brand Nike's heftiest property, dominates San Francisco, California's shopping-district skyline as he takes rooftop billing on the Milenium building at Union Square. This must be the first time a Filipino icon has his image hovering large at Union Square.

Julia Roberts is new face of Lancôme

FRENCH COSMETICS LANCÔME has charmed the Pretty Woman.

According to Women's Wear Daily, Julia Roberts has signed up as global ambassador for the brand, she heads in a string of Hollywood A-listers to endorse cosmetics.

While celebrities endorsing beauty brands has become ubiquitous in recent years, getting Roberts—once considered the highest-paid American actress, commanding a salary upward of $20 million per film—to sign on the dotted line is considered a coup in the beauty industry, in much the same way that Harper got Madonna to endorse the brand in Europe, or Demi Moore for a Helena Rubinstein fragrance.

Lancôme, however, declined to disclose the details of Roberts' contract, WWD said.

In 2006, Roberts was rumored to have been married by diaper-selling giant Avent to be its face. But as some Hollywood gossips go, it remained just that: a gossip.

Roberts, 42, whose first hit was the Garry Marshall film "Pretty Woman," has appeared in few projects in recent years, instead opting to quietly raise her three children with husband, cameraman Danny Moder, away from Hollywood.

She will appear next in the screen adaptation of Elizabeth Gilbert's best-selling memoir "Eat, Pray Love," and Marshall's "Valentine's Day."

THE DESTINATION store unveiled Guess' Fall/Winter 2009 collection.

Denim show, party toast rocker lifestyle

GUESS RECENTLY HELD THE rocker-style party/fashionation at the newly opened Encore at The Fort in Bonifacio Global City.

At the party were models Rich Hewson, Karen Bustamante and Joey Mead.

Also present were socialite Divine Lee, and sibling actors Alessandra and Jessanca de Rossi. The latter was with her boyfriend Jake Ledesma.

Xingu, the events company conceptualized and organized the show which unveiled Guess' Fall/Winter 2009 collection.

A scrap to highlight the edgy collection consisted of multiple-level platforms with a drummer playing during the fashion show.

Special Edition Guess-designed guitars were also awarded to lucky guests.

EVA Advincula and David De Koninginne'ster

NOCAD Divas

Vicki Belo, Bella Gutierrez and Criscelle Herrera

YEDDA Mutia Ramadhia

DIVINE Lee

LINDA Luy

ANNE Curtis in vintage Glen

NIGEL Francisco and Joy Manaster

MARIVIC Rufino and Miguelito Munoz

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney

DUMMI and Mandy Santos

POPS Fernandez

CHRIS Pe and Nanette Medina

MONI Nemelo Tantoco and Leo Salonga

The 'Mt. Everest' of formal events

By Lizzy Levista
Contributor

IF YOU ARE A SERIOUS social "swanniversary" this month's Saint Hall was the Mt. Everest of formal events.

It's the pearl of the social landscape where only Yat-Sen's chosen society gals, movie stars and Manila's generic dames come in their pair-drop pears, while dashing gentlemen who are diplomats, captains of industry or the premium boys in town arrive in black-tie tuxedos.

Champagne cocktails flowed as the women made grand entrances at the foyer of Makati Shangri-La ballroom, in designer ball gowns while their entourages dripped like dew drops on their figures.

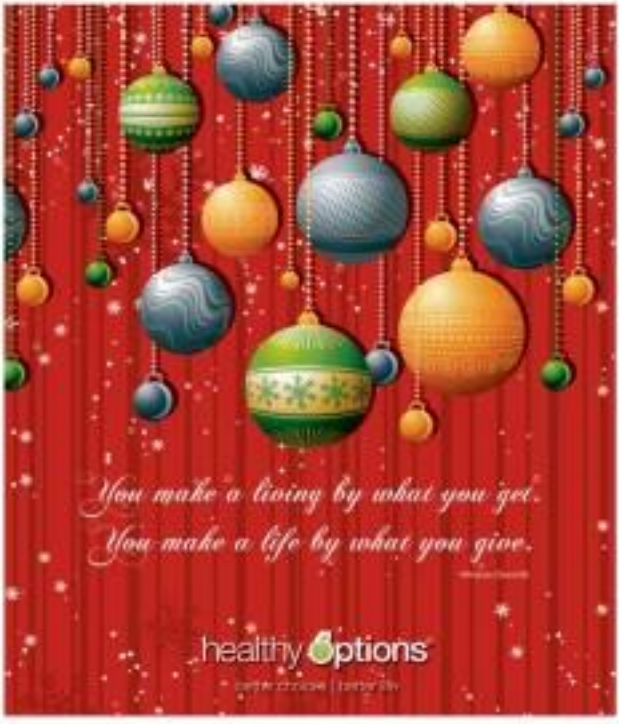
There were too decidedly distinct trends that night: classic solitaire gowns that were chic and elegant, and what we shall call "trimspotting"—for women who gave in to sheer, dramatic, over-the-top overture.

Then Hollywood gowns had huge trains that were very provocative yet could be troublesome when sitting for dinner, much more for dancing the night away after. There were strictly formal red-carpet gowns.

Who's the better dressed? It all depends on your personal taste? Do you want drop-dead drama and extra weight on you nerdi? Or do you like the adage that simplicity—not to mention comfort—is beauty?

Still, everyone would agree on one thing. It was the best Saint Ball yet.

PAOLO, Camilla and Mark Villar



Great diamond ring with which to propose

CARLOS Fernandez and Kelly Milo

MY DIAMOND PRESENTS THE Unity Ring, its new engagement ring. It comes with three white-gold bands—two outer bands that are crowned and a single band with a 4-carat radiant-cut diamond.

My Diamond says such union is exemplified by couples Carlos Fernandez and Kelly Milo, and Juan Miguel Romero and Isabel Bueno.

Bueno said she and Bansot Juan Miguel, or Migi, are definitely a modern couple. "We allow each other to grow in our chosen fields," she said. "We grow as individuals and we grow as well as a couple."

Romero agreed. "We support each other's career, but we make sure to set aside time for each other—to just lie in bed watching DVDs while steamboy on smoke," he said.

To make his proposal, Romero said he fooled her into thinking she had won an all-expense paid trip to a beach on Lagen, Palawan.

"It's something we both love and look forward to. We'll take trips to beaches here and abroad ever since we first got together, so thinking of where to do it was a no-brainer," Romero said.

Bueno said she had been clueless about the setup, so it was a big surprise for her when he proposed.

"I'm looking forward to the wedding," she said. "And I'm excited to be one of coming up with something different and exciting with your own personal touch to it beginning!"

UNITY Ring

Carlos Fernandez said he also had to set Kelly Milo up to be cued to propose. "I didn't propose the usual way, on one knee, but I did propose in a memorable overlooking the beach," he said.

Fernandez had planned a beach trip with Kelly and their dearest friends, who were all in on the surprise.

"I did even see it coming," she said. "I was stunned . . . I think he had to ask me the question twice until I finally said, 'of course!'"

My Diamond is available at 3/F Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City, tel. 6899067; 2/F Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati, 7573886; 1/G Gateway Mall, Cubao, Quezon City, 9124015; 2/F SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City, 5536049-97; 2/F Mega Mall, Bonifacio Drive, Mandaluyong City 6319490.

JUAN Miguel Romero and Isabel Bueno

ENJOY A SNOWY CHRISTMAS IN HONG KONG DISNEYLAND'S WINTER WONDERLAND!

DREAMING OF SPENDING A WHITE Christmas with your loved ones? Live out your Yuletide fantasies at Hong Kong Disneyland Resort from Nov. 20, 2009 to Jan. 1, 2010. Sparkling lights and lilting snow will transform the entire Resort into a magical winter wonderland. It will be a perfect holiday to remember!

IT'S A SMALL WORLD CHRISTMAS

It's a whole new Christmas celebration at "It's A Small World." Capture unforgettable Christmas memories with six giant winter scene pop-up cards. You'll delight in finding all 40 characters along the way.

LIGHTS OF WINTER

When night begins to fall, the night is transformed with the all new Lights of Winter. From the candlelight to the Sparkling Castle Lights—all set in perfect harmony to inspiring holiday music. See the world through a Hologram Viewer and view magic in the making!

MAIN STREET CHRISTMAS

Stroll down Main Street U.S.A. and immerse yourself in a picturesque Christmas amidst gentle snowflakes falling softly around you. Meet Santa, and enjoy a cup of hot cocoa as you listen to carolers.

"LET IT SNOW" CHRISTMAS PARADE

Join in the merriment as hundreds of dancers perform in a glittering parade. Get ready for unexpected weather as we have word that snow is forecasted throughout the show!

AWARD-WINNING HOTELS

From decorated lobbies to splendid Christmas trees and live bands playing traditional carols, the two award-winning hotels in Hong Kong Disneyland Resort are all decked to brighten the Yuletide mood.

CHRISTMAS TREATS

Share in the joys of the season with heartwarming traditional yuletide deliciousness, whether you're settling down for a feast with the family or snacking on-the-go with friends.

MEMORABLE WINTER'S GIFTS

You'll never run out of great gift ideas at Hong Kong Disneyland Resort. There's a wedding Elite for everyone. Choose from toys to clothing, stationary, souvenirs and homewares from all your favorite Disney collections.

For more information, please visit www.hongkongdisneyland.com

Hong Kong Disneyland, Cathay Pacific and Dragonair present

BUY 2 GET 1 FREE* VACATION PACKAGES

From US$356** per person

You can create magical memories with family and friends by purchasing "BUY 2 GET 1 FREE" Hong Kong Disneyland Vacation Packages from Cathay Pacific and Dragonair – plus you'll receive an array of value-added benefits.

Your "BUY 2 GET 1 FREE" Vacation Package includes:

Guests staying at Hong Kong Disneyland Resort themed hotels also enjoy:

Book now through Cathay Pacific Reservations office at 6021737-0888, Dragonair Reservations office at 6021737-0111 or contact your travel agent for more details!

BALLY's Singapore flagship store at ION

Vintage Swiss brand gets a facelift

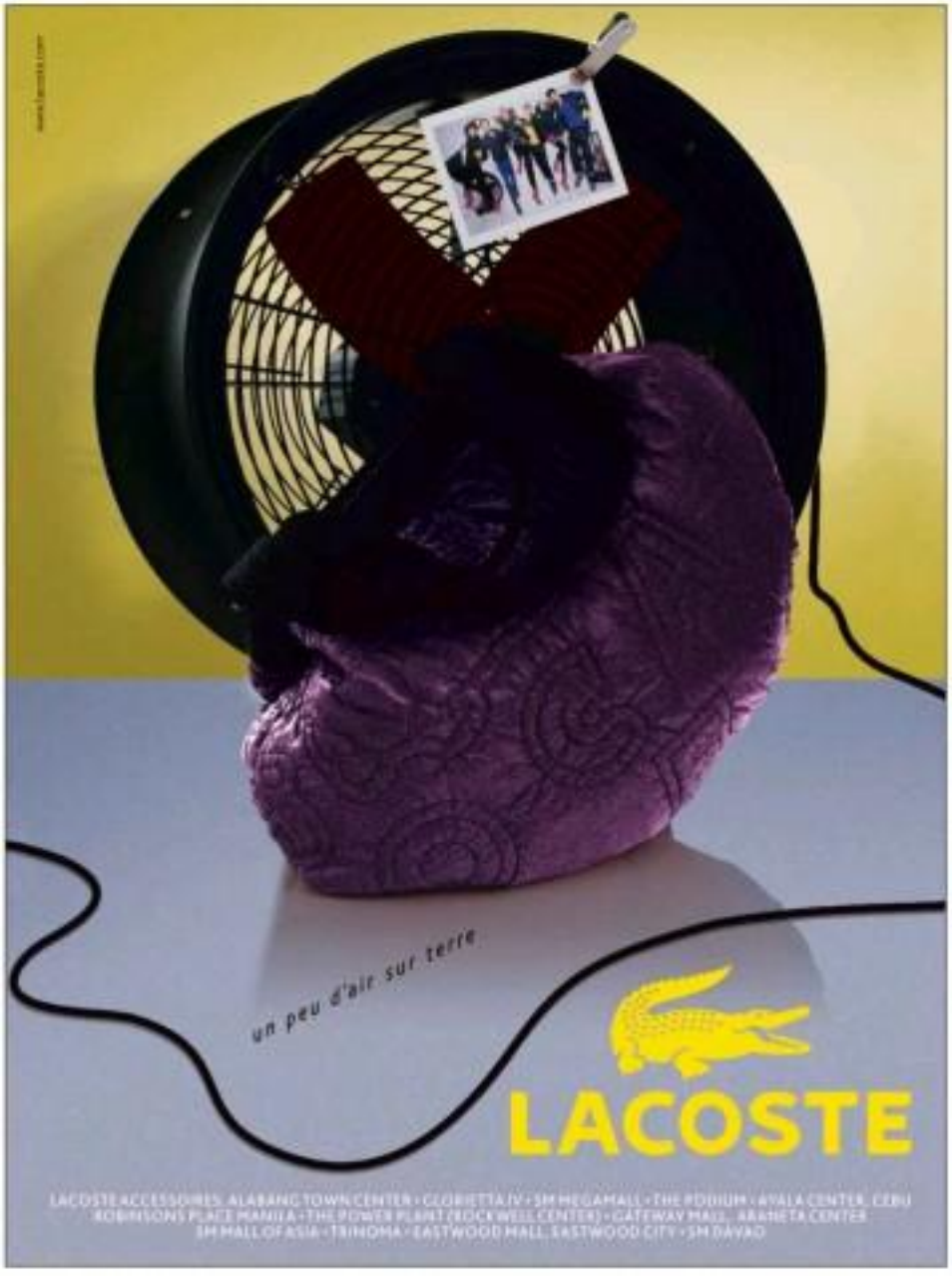
By Stefanie Cabal

ON A BRIGHT AFTERNOON, in the luxurious premier suite of the five-star Ritz-Carlton Millenia hotel in Singapore, Bally's creative director Brian Atwood has been in between interviews with the Asian press since 10 in the morning.

The next day was the memorable opening of Bally's second largest boutique in Asia, at the newly opened ION mall. The crème de la crème of Singapore society, literary and media gathered at the opening.

The glamorous newlywed Singaporean celebrity couple Fann Wong and Christopher Lee, who wore Bally designs exclu-

VIENNA F5



METATHIONE skin-whitening line

TRIACTILINE Instant Deep Wrinkle Filler

Skincare for the stressful holiday season

BEAUTY DEPARTMENT! Some Makeup artist Clinique Cosmetics has proclaimed today (Dec. 11) Happy Day! Those who buy any bottle variant of Clinique's Happy Fragrance will receive the following free at the Clinique counters: skin consultation, three-piece gift set, orange manicure and a thread card.

The promo is Clinique and Bianca's way of supporting Unicef and sharing Happy Joy with the kids who are the beneficiaries.

Too much work and party scheduled for the season, but no time to rest? Your tired of lifestyle will sure pose fast. Here are some anti-aging products that have passed my test and will make great stocking stuffers.

Good Skin's Tri-Active Instant Deep Wrinkle Filler not only erases the signs of aging like wrinkles and huge pores due to lack of firmness; it also camouflages or blurs them so you can fake perfect skin.

The texture is surprisingly matte but it works in such a way that the makeup like foundation, concealer and powder do not settle into the lines and wrinkles, but glide on and stay on a smooth ridge-free surface.

You should not take glutathione capsules just for the whitening side effect. Its main purpose is to help your liver in filtering the toxins out of your body brought about by excessive drinking, medication and eating.

The silky serum's skin is just a booster while the big overdose of glutathione with alpha lipoic acid and vitamin C is what causes the whitening side effect. The 250-mg capsule is enough to help the liver.

Regular brand is Snowcaps. Its extra strength and for dark skin, there are Glutanone and Opaltonate. The latter has 600-mg reduced glutathione and 100-mg alpha-lipoic acid.

The reverse case I have tried is the Jurassic Metathione. The first thing I noticed was that the skin on my forearms and belly had become ashen.

Whitening lines registered around my toes after the third week. My change was two tablets a day, one for 9 a.m. and another for 9 p.m.

Those who just want the benefits of glutathione have one tablet a day is okay. Those who want to be whiter need at least two-a-day plus vitamin C to boost the procedure.

I know someone who takes Wet Tear times a day with 1000 mg vitamin C and her skin is obviously lighter after six months. No one will call her nuevera uno.

Check out www.theskeynshop.com, which sells hard-to-find products like the three-step M-I skincare which erases facial pigmentation and other aggressive peeling; Cetaven eye cream for dark undereye circles; Obagi Nu-derm system for severe acne and pigmentation; Optimale Glutathione capsules; and Rare Earth hydroquinone cream, which erases scars and dark spots while whitening the skin (but not safe for pregnant women, though).

E-mail the author at beautyreads@yahoo.com.

MAKEOVER 911

Kenny Santos

What is your beauty indulgence this holiday?

CHRISTMAS IS SLOWLY rolling in and while sticking off items on the gift list, you'll like to cover almost a few holiday items you want to buy for yourself.

I'm pretty sure I'm not the only one who's got herself in the gift list. I asked six celebrities about their one major beauty splurge this holiday season. These are the items they are willing to lay a bunch of cash for.

Isabel Rivas, *Backstage Boss*

My girlfriend was the first to introduce me to the Lab series of products. It's a brand solely dedicated to men. Best of all, the products don't have any strong smelly scents, just a clean smell after. For the holidays, I'll be getting my second batch of these products. Lab Series... Shave Cream, Multi Action Face Wash and Oxy Stick.—Jon Hall, model-athlete

This Christmas, I'd like to update my look to the colors of the season. I'm splurging on Shu Uemura's Holiday collection with their featured designer Chanel Tsumori. I love the Flower Cut palette which has subtle glitter, the duo color highlighter, eyeliner and, of course, the mini brush set for touch ups.—Michelle Madrigal, actress

HD Powder by Make Up for Ever! Lolas have their waterproof eyebrow corrector.—Heart Evangelista, TV host/actress

I'm really into the Orange High performance cleansing oil by Shu Uemura. I don't use much on my skin, mainly just this. It's cleansing and moisturizing all at the same time.—Ormiston Custodio, comp and commercial model

The beauty product I am loving this season is the Maybelline Car Eyes Mascara. I don't even need to use a curler, it instantly opens up my eyes and thickens my lashes. Perfect for the upcoming party season.—Bashir Chan, makeup artist

MAKE UP For Ever eyebrow corrector

SHU UEMURA holiday collection

LAB Series for men

HEART Evangelista

ERWIESSA Cabuco

MARIA Chan

MICHELLE Madrigal

Energy, Excitement and Endless Fun Starts Now in Dumaguete obinsons Malls Opens First Full-service Mall in Dumaguete

Vintage Swiss brand . . .

From page F1

stortly made for their wedding, were theirs, too.

Atwood finally met the couple in person, he says, "It was such an incredible honor to be asked to make them and Christopher's wedding custom. It was a wonderful project to work on."

Atwood came from New York, where he finished dressing the Spring/Summer 2010 campaign, but he wanted, not, coined everyone without a trace of jet lag. He has the looks and charisma of a starstruck idol, but with a cool and relaxed vibe that would put anyone at ease.

With his gorgeous looks and his flair in shoe design that are proven marketable assets, this former model is an impressive CV includes stints as Technical producer, a creative apprentice to Gianni Versace (Atwood was the last American designer hired), and designer who worked alongside Dominic Sessano on the Versace line, the young Serious line originally launched in 1998.

When Atwood debuted his eponymous label in 2001, it catapulted him to stardom among fashion-savvy and -unsavvy shoe lovers like Gwyneth Paltrow, Courtney Cox, Nicole Richie and Madonna, and the younger stylettes Lindsay Lohan, Anne Hathaway and Nicole Richie.

In 2005, his design career was recognized by the CFDA (Council of Fashion Designers of America), who awarded him the Swarovski Perry Ellis award for accessory design. To this day, Atwood's adoring fans from around the world describe his stilettos as "wicked" and "very sexy."

New generation

Bally approached Atwood in 2007 to re-energize the old Swiss brand, which has been in business for over 155 years. He was the perfect person for the job, given his pedigree of the past.

The biggest challenge was to make the brand relevant and to fit the feminine, since it was perceived by many as a men's brand. "Even though the history of Bally had a large female archive of shoes, understanding what to do with the brand was needed, what it stood for, and where we had to bring it to make it contemporary and appeal to the current generation of Bally," he says.

"Although we have the older clients of first generation, we also want to appeal to the younger generation. We make it by updating the styles of the archives, especially the shoes and the bags," he adds.

For instance, for the women's Autumn/Winter 2009 collection, the sexy shoes are among favorites among the stylish set. "The stars of the collection are the Pappillon shoe, classic Mary Jane made of silk with hand-painted floral with metallic-patterned gilded heels, and the Bottoni, which comes in ankle, knee-high and thigh-high stretch suede open-toe boots, with a 120-mm gold lacquered heels," Atwood explains.

"The bags are fast becoming favorites, too," he says, referring to functionally voluminous satchels, made of pleated nappa, laminated gold foil, natural and jewel-color snakeskin, embellished with gold hardware.

Atwood visually connected with the younger market using glamorous and steamy ad campaigns. Forty-year-old model Devon Teuscher looked gorgeous in the Spring/Summer 2009 campaign shot by Mario Sorrenti in Miami beach. In the ad, Teuscher was flirting with a lucky topless male model, Bally's exclusive long-legged accessorist, but the campaign surely elicited serious reactions.

Atwood's perfect poster girls for Bally are the likes of Leighton Meester, Cameron Diaz and Kate Hudson.

"There is no one to the very die-hearts, up, whether down, down or up," he says of Kate's cool style.

Maybe Atwood, the real Bally heroine is "Someone who is definitely an individual in what she wears, how she puts the pieces together in the way she does the likes and not really taking their entire look and wearing it exactly copied like in an editorial. There is always that aura and confidence to it that people can relate to. And this is what we want to convey for the brand," he explains.

Swiss positioning

Catering to the needs of both genderlines, without alienating the other was quite tricky for the brand, so he sifted through the archives for his inspiration. "There were 13,000 pairs of shoes. I can't say one is more beautiful than the other because a certain color can inspire a whole creation, the stitching can inspire another ... But more importantly, we didn't want to forget what the brand stood for," he says.

Bally, the luxury brand synonymous with quality and elegance, was founded in 1851 by Carl Franz Bally in Switzerland. In 1892, it was known for the shoes for the international jet-setting, which included Charlie Chaplin and Queen Beatrice of Holland.

In the 1950s, it was the bling boots worn by all manufacturers, like Sir Edmund Hillary on his Everest climb to Mt. Everest. And for the moneyed, 3rd walk on the moon, the rubber soles for Neil Armstrong's boots, was by Bally.

Today, Bally has emerged as the longest-running global luxury brand in the world. "Although our direction is modern, we are a Swiss company and the positioning is still very Swiss. It is a very sensual and effortless kind of brand. It is what it stands for, quality and craftsmanship will always be preserved, using the most natural materials," Atwood shares.

Home in Asia

According to Atwood, Asia's decision to open and expand in Asia was a conscious one. "In terms of goal, we chose the top locations among our competitors. We selected Singapore for having IOR as a project with private investors."

"We were the first to penetrate the Asian market more than anyone else, 20 years ago, so we were here before everyone else. The excitement of the brand is extremely high. We are continuing to crush hard."

Being true to its heritage and to commemorate the boutique's opening, there will be a retrospect of shoes and posters selected from Bally's archives. Four styles of shoes from the '70s to '90s were also reproduced in time for the opening in a limited edition collection available exclusively at IOR.

The shoes are crafted with the same attention to detail as the originals, whether they are the men's two-tone spectator style of linen and leather, or the women's evening Mary Janes in satin. All the specifications, such as the shoe size, year of origin, and color numbers are hand-written inside each pair for authentication.

"Aside from the limited edition reproduction, we are introducing a special limited edition group of bags in honor of the 'Epic,' because we are always thinking of the Asian market when we design our collection," Atwood says.

Once the flagship store opens to the public, what can a customer expect?

COLLECTION of shoes displayed inside the store during the opening of Bally at IOR

CELEBRITY couple who wore Bally designs during their wedding

MEN'S "Sabri" two-tone spectator's reproduction from the 1920s archive

"BALLY" Mary Jane's made of satin

SALLY'S creative director Brian Atwood

"Luxury experience?" Atwood quips.

Luxury store

The new Bally flagship occupies a space of over 6,000 square feet that houses the full range of men's and women's shoes and bags, as well as RTW collections, which is available at Singapore for the first time. The store supports the principle of creating effortlessly elegant spaces that evoke a sense of sophistication and ease.

The neutral color palette of Bally store plays with the contrast of light and dark surfaces and textures. Luxurious suede walls are punctuated with brushed bronze screened displays. Natural oak-wood floors are ornamentally divided by brown velvet rug with leather trims, delineating areas that separate the women's from the men's collection.

Soft natural boucle fabric sofas, low leather tables with bronze details and small square table tops create a comfortable, yet elegant setting. And it's quick glance at the store, you just know that Atwood wasn't kidding when he meant luxury.

QC PARKS DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS INDUCTED

Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. (seated, center) recently inducted the directors and officers of Quezon City Parks Development Foundation Inc. (QCPDFI). Elected directors are Dr. Rolando Pulanco (vice president), Justice Rodolfo Palattao, former Mayor Brigido Simon Jr. (board chair), former Vice Mayor Charito Planas (president), Justice Nanette Maria and professor Carmelita Ramirez; pending administrative calls, Amores, directors Dr. Lydia Buenafe and engineer Felix Ringor, board secretary. With role Duay and legal counsel, lawyer Pablo Garcia Jr. During his term, Mayor Simon started the development of Quezon Memorial Circle through a GO-NGO partnership with the Quezon City Parks Development Foundation, which has also drawn support from the administration of former Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. and incumbent Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. Planas steered the improvement and management of this 26-hectare public park and landmark for almost 10 years without budgetary allocation for its maintenance.

Spend with Visa for a chance to win.

Make your shopping secure, convenient, and more rewarding this holiday season. Just spend with Visa and you could drive away with one of three new Toyota Altis. And if you shop overseas, you triple your chances of winning. Promo is from November 28, 2009 to February 14, 2010 with no minimum spending required.

To join, send an SMB to 2361(Globe, TM, and Sun) or to 325 (Smart and Talk N Text) - text Visa <space> name that appears on card, 6-digit approval code, name of bank that issued the card, date of transaction in mm/dd/yy format. Or visit visagoexplore.com/ph for online registration. Selection of winners will be on December 22, 2009, January 20 and February 18, 2010. Terms and conditions apply.

more people around the world go with Visa
visagoexplore.com/ph
VISA

Per BTr-NCR Permit No. [illegible], Series of 2009.

Elysium featured tonight in Paco Park Presents

MEZZO SOPRANO MARIA KRISSIA Valencia Mendoza, soprano Gwendolynne Her bet Pulido Tato and pianist Jess Cris Celeste are the featured performers tonight at 8 in Paco Park Presents: Elysium program. Free. Peter Piccio is host. Admission is free.

Sounds of Christmas

The CEU Concert Band, under the music direction of Frederico Parle, brings The Sounds of Christmas on Dec. 13, 5 p.m., in Concert at the Park. Mirelle Padilla hosts the show. Admission is free.

Special room rates

The Manor at Camp John Hay offers Bounce Back special rates of up to 50 percent discount on its suites until Dec. 23. The special rate rates are: Superior Room, P3,600 for two persons per night; Deluxe, P5,150 for two; One-Bedroom Suite, P5,850 for three, and Two-Bedroom Suite, P6,100 for four; all inclusive of welcome drink at the Manor Bar, free use of the gym and jacuzzi, complimentary foot massage at The Manor Spa and basket of delicatessen goodies from Le Chef Delicatessen. Call 6455863, 6455911, 6455913, 6455924, 6455926.

New Year at Marco Polo Cebu

The Marco Polo Plaza Cebu in Cebu City will hold New Year's countdown on Dec. 31. Featured are fireworks display at the Grand Balcony and dinner with musical entertainment at the hotel's dining hotspots. Watch weekend Jay Dance and hit band at the Grand Ballroom for P2,388 net (inclusive of New Year Band at Fl Vendo Restaurant & Poolside for P1,231 net (minimum consumable), and acoustic sensation Royal Plus Band at the 1,200-ft high Ola Bar & Grill for P2,500 net (minimum consumable). Call 8494341 and 800-2021111 in Cebu.

Sushi art

The Maya Kitchen will host Sushi Art Workshop on Dec. 13, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., back to back with Classic Japanese Dishes, 2-5 p.m. For inquiries, log on to www.themayakitchen.com and The Maya Kitchen Culinary Arts Center Eastwood-Salcedo at 85th Liberty Building, 4 Amapola Avenue (Pinay Road), Makati City; tel. 8903071 local 106; e-mail contactus@themayakitchen.com.

Friday's promo

TGI Friday's celebrates its 10th year today by offering Chicken Fingers & only P185 Sirloin Bowls, including fries. The hand-battered chicken tenders are fried and served with Friday's fries and choice of barbecue sauce or honey mustard dip.

Friday's is at Glorietta 3, Robinsons Place Manila, Mabuhay Times Center, Tomas Morato, Sta. Lucia, Robinsons Galleria, Bonifacio High Street, TriMarina, SM Mall of Asia and Ayala Center, Cebu.

Guitar concert

Cebu's talented classical guitarists Ivie Nicholas Tupaz and Ismael Sumalpo at their joint recital at the world's most decorated classical master pieces in Cedar Studio. A concert to be held at the University of the Philippines Los Baños today.

LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

Lifestyle entrepreneurs get into a global mindset

Bank props up generations of businessmen for the future

"THE BEST PLACE TO START business is the ground you're sitting on.

"Expose yourself to what's out there."

"Don't put your eggs in one basket."

"After every calamity, sales recover."

These were among the insights—look out of years, if not decades, of dogging it out in the marketplace—that three select entrepreneurs shared over lunch hosted by HSBC.

The three were Mona Aguinaldo, Inc. Executive Vice President from ex-Boracay Blue branches, president of Mrs. Cristina Manufacturing Inc., Hello Body Manufacturing Inc. and Chairman Manufacturing Inc.; Jennifer Jaime-Hawkins, jewelry designer who migrate to Japan, India, France and Italy, and then-time finalist in the prestigious Ito Bente Mahindra television-based Awards, who joined the family jewelry business in 1995.

They shared their experiences and insights into starting their lifestyle business, building it, sharpening it through good and bad times—and using banking the right way.

Among those in the round table—self-made men from their 30s to 60s—were Aimee Velasco, HSBC senior vice president and head of corporate and institutional banking, and Johnson Gan Jr., HSBC senior vice president of group corporate communications.

It was interesting to note that Huang, Aranday and Jaime-Hawkins spanned almost three generations. They share an undeniably strong feature—they fervently believe in their product.

Huang started with $0.16 years ago; $10 now has 312 stores nationwide. Aranday started as impromptu work in 1994 at www.ph.gif off the boat from the ethnic threads 22 after graduating from Senior Citizenship in Cebu. Jaime-Hawkins went on her own in 2007.

In 1958 Aranday opened his business, manufacturing underwear, bed sheets, pillowcases and towels under the brand "Candies." In 1972 he went into infant's and children's wear and infant layette collection and gift sets under the Hello Body brand. By 1979 he was exporting Hello Body to Europe, Australia and the Middle East. In 1995, months acquired the license for Disney Swoops and Looney Tunes for the infants and buildings lines. He has now both the license in 11 countries with over 25 brands.

Huang's version of the comedy's leading comedy fan, who years ago dropped up to the plate as they say, by owning the rights of the luxury retail chain Stores Specialties, Inc. His grandparents, Ambrosio Bryan and Glory Ann Bachrach's name from 50 years ago. With his mother Estrella working by his grandmother's side, quite literally in running the Bachrach stores, Huang grew up in the retail environment.

He not only cut his chops in the department store, he was also exposed, very early on, to dealing with the foreign principals of Bachrach—all owners or representatives of the world's top luxury brands. The Tantoco clan, through Bill, has longstanding ties with Ferragamo, Gucci, Cartier and Escada, among others.

"The global market brings with it intense competition," Huang stressed.

HSBC executive Velasco couldn't agree with that more, but she noted that business today is "less 15-centric." HSBC, now more than 140 years old and already 125 years in the Philippines, has a global network of trade experts in over 80 countries, from Europe to Africa to Asia.

Veteran manufacturer and now licensee Aranday was proud to note that the Philippines has considerable improved quality control—in his case, resulting in bagging the Disney licensees.

Also all three—besides Aranday, is convinced more than ever that the Philippines is the best place to start a business. "People here love to spend," he said.

What does it take to succeed in business? Aranday singled out "guts, know-how, and trust your suppliers well. Don't take short cut."

Speaking from experience, Velasco said that HSBC will be there for them in the future, it not demanded by the spate of disasters in the country in 2009. "After every calamity, sales improve. And recessions are up and over."

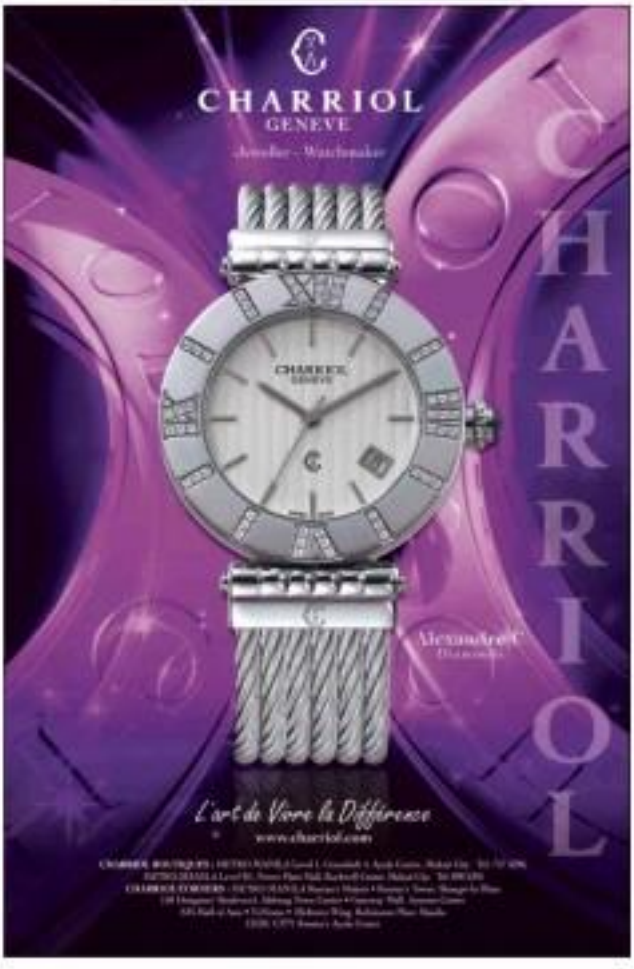
After 2010 is election year when traditionally the campaign sets up spending.

Meanwhile, HSBC Trade and Supply Chain partners with entrepreneurs/exporters to design trade solutions and financing that can assist not only to meet their needs but also to help them set growth strategies.

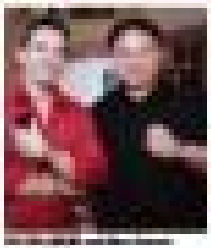
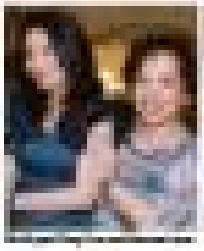
Aside from Trade and Supply Chain, HSBC offers an exhaustive range of services: Global banking, cash management, investment services, corporate and commercial banking, global markets (sales-trade services in a wide range of products), global payments and cash management, and securities services.

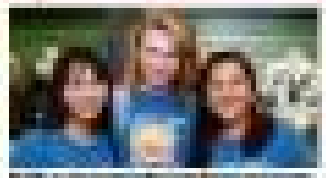
In edge, aside from its track record in the growing economies, capability enabling entrepreneurs more and more access to finances and to work practically everywhere.

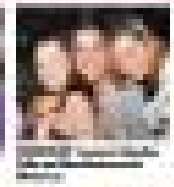
JOHANNA Garvis, HSBC SVP and head, group communications and corporate sustainability; Mona Aranday, president, Mrs+Cristina Manufacturing Inc.; Jennifer Jaime-Hawkins; Aimee Huang, executive vice president, Bachrach Group of Companies; and Jaime Velasco, HSBC SVP and head of corporate and institutional banking



HSBC's Timm Aarons, SVP for trade and supply chain; Abhishek Malvania, VP for middle market enterprises; and Mina Concha, SVP for commercial banking





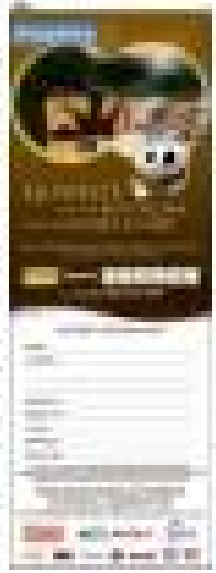
Valli showcases luxury in its new timepieces

Panasonic

SAVE POWER by 40% with
THE INVERTER POWER ZERO TECHNOLOGY

ZERO!

How Isabel Oli maintains her flawless olive skin



HOW TO BE A WRAP STAR

There's something of a wrap star in each of us, knowing how beautiful packaging makes presents perfect and brings a big smile to our loved one's face. But the reality is we're all in a frenzy mode during the holiday rush, and have limited wrapping time. SM Stationery section has a wonderful selection of bags and boxes to help you wrap your gifts easily and make them special. Check these out at the Stationery Section of the SM Department Store.

Fun Gift Bags For Kids

This clear Santa Claus gift bag is ideal for homemade treats, candy and other small gifts.

This plastic Christmas bag is perfect for small, irregularly shaped gifts. Make your gift presentation even more special by adding a color sheer ribbon and customize gift tag.

Fill this Christmas Bear gift bag with candy, small toys or tokens and tie it with a personalized ribbon for the perfect finishing touch!

Wrapping presents like bikes and life-sized stuffed toys is like fun a gift inch.

Kids will love the big Christmas surprise packed in this gift sack.

Elegant Gift Boxes And Tags For The Sophisticated

Keep on hand plenty of sizes easy to store and reusable gift boxes for last minute gift wrapping. This gift box set includes a folded box, ribbon and greetcard.

SM Stationery's new collection of elegant gift boxes will make your presentation look even more special.

Make your gift presentation look fabulous even when you're on a hurry with this convenient gift box set.

Elegant, durable and reusable gift boxes in a variety of sizes to fit your gifts.

Small this stamped gift box with an elastic satin cord for a beautiful finish.

Go for this metallic, snowflake-stamped gift box for quick and easy gift wrapping.

Top your wine gift tag with a complementing ready-made bow for a truly festive feel.

WRAP SESSION

Follow these simple steps to get organized and create exciting gifts from the Stationery Section of all SM stores.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE. Before you get started, make sure you have all the materials you need: scissors, a glue gun, a craft box, printed paper items, blue Japanese paper and accessories, tie next to wrap in a dress, flat surface.

STEP 1. Instead of using the monotony-gift wrap, we will use Japanese paper in a few bright colors. Cut your Japanese paper to fit the size of your box. Use permanent glue to create a shaded look by positioning the paper firmly such as your hands over the folds to create neat lines.

STEP 4. Give your present a sense of individuality by adding extra details like co-ordinating materials or other unique accessories. Here, add a giftbag with snowman design for that festive touch.

STEP 3. Glue the pleated bow around the box corner only. By leaving some ribbon unglued, you can tie your gift or may cling to it when it will be in your gift box before the big day!

STEP 2. Overlay your cut ribbon over the pleated bow and create a bow on the corner. Make it look more special with a flower bow. Add a touch bow will also do.

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

LOOK mag survey says men love it when women wax

BRAZILIAN WAX...MANY WOMEN LOVE it, but how does it strike guys?

Of the men surveyed by LOOK magazine, 99 percent said it makes women look cleaner, plus it gives them a better view.

Also, go for a wax and reduce need for underwear. My wasn't review, but get a Brazilian, and you'll save gas big amenities. As it wears out, a lot of men are grooming down there as an ego boost. They don't just think you're waxed, they think you've been to the dawn.

"When a woman it's with takes the time to make she hears, so to speak," says Hecla, 25, "It shows she's trying to look sexy to a LOOK, 91

Exclusive dining rewards with your Citi credit card

Instant Citi Rewards now at Teriyaki Boy, Sizzlin' Pepper Steak, Le Coeur de France

By Annelle S. Tayao

From cartoons to cars to mobile phones, the Japanese culture has long been infused with our own. Not to be missed, of course, is their cuisine—in fact, no geek and would be complete without a Japanese restaurant.

Cities that has been drawing diners for some at years now, and to death a homegrown success in the local food industry is Teriyaki Boy. Opened in 2003, Teriyaki Boy was introduced to the dining public by Teriyaki Boy Group Inc., a 100-percent Filipino-owned corporation under the leadership of Hyan Tio.

Soon famous for their delicious Teriyaki Boy Chicken and Gyoza, among other dishes, Teriyaki Boy caught the attention of Martin Lorenzo, owner of Pancake House Inc. In short, Lorenzo and Tio formed a partnership that welcomed Teriyaki Boy to the Pancake House family.

"With that new partnership came a new look," says Jina Feliciano, Teriyaki Boy Senior Marketing Manager. "We remodeled all the Teriyaki Boy outlets for a more cosmopolitan cafe look, which drew great feedback from our diners." After almost nine years in this market, Teriyaki Boy are now in 38 locations, including company-owned and franchise outlets.

The Lorenzo-Tio partnership, however, didn't stop with Teriyaki Boy. Those innovations soon brought in a new Japanese concept restaurant, which also introduced a different kind of Japanese cooking — Sizzlin' Pepper Steak.

Adopting the modern Japanese way of preparing steaks, Sizzlin' Pepper Steak has introduced to the dining public choice cuts of

Minutes from Le Coeur de France

Pork Pepper Rice Meal, free from Sizzlin' Pepper Steak for a minimum food bill of P1,500 charged to Citi Card

Get one order of Gyoza free for a minimum food bill of P1,000 in Teriyaki Boy charged to Citicard

Teriyaki Boy Group Inc.'s Jina Feliciano and Citibank Credit Cards' Myra Elma

BBQ Tori Kamaage, a Jina's seller from Teriyaki Boy

With your Citi credit card, enjoy dining discounts, pay using your Rewards Points, even redeem free movie passes after – truly a rewarding experience all around

Pass the hat

A bad hair day can mean a good hat day

STRAW FLOPPY HAT
Liz Claiborne leopard-print sweater, Stradivarius; straw floppy hat, Bonnet's.

FOOR BOYFRIEND. IT SEEMS like everything to our wardrobe these days is stolen, or borrowed from his closet.

From boyfriend jeans to blazers, men's wear nowadays should just be called "boyfriend's wear."

Looks like he'll be in over his head with the new trend also.... the boyfriend hat. (They're stealing boyfriends too?)

Yes, we're borrowing from the boys again. It's just that ours have just cool-looking hat styles, and I'm not talking about those ubiquitous baseball caps. Think fedoras, painter caps, boaters, aviator hats, bowlers and trilbys.

Mabuhay!

Jenni J. Epperson

Bad hair, begone!

Other than being a great statement accessory, hats are also the best way to hide your bad hair day. If your crowning glory ain't doing it for you, then donning a hat will do the trick in seconds. A bad hair day is simply an excuse for a good hat day.

A hat is the most noticeable fashion item anyone can wear because the onlookers' attention is first drawn to the face. On a functional dimension, hats are the perfect accessory to shield you from the elements, whether it's the cold of winter, or the harsh tropical sun.

Initially, headwear offered protection from the elements and from injury from falling rocks, weapons or enemy. Later on, head coverings became symbols of status or authority.

Hats progressed to become not only a uniform, but also an art form. Has wearing hat its own long history in the fashion annals. In the Edwardian age, everyone wore a hat, whether you were poor or rich, old or young, only beggars went bareheaded.

Even militant suffragettes did not associate without a hat. Then others labeled what it (1920s-40s) started, hats became less practical. Bankers of etiquette soon broken down and then wearing decreased.

Hats on

I've often wondered why we're not more of a hat-wearing culture when a good hat is not only a most stylish fashion statement, but a practical one considering our weather patterns that's either sunny or rainy. Then again, what better way to save heads (hats to stand out as a bare-headed crowd with a really cool headpiece?

On these pages are some inspired ways to use the boyfriend hat. Whether it's androgynous or feminine, a hat is always a great way to top off an outfit.

For more fashion musings, follow me on http://twitter.com/jennieppersson

PANAMA HAT
Leonard checkered collared shirt, Bonnet's; pleated skirt, Giap; white peeptoe hat, ACCLL

WOVEN TRILBY HAT
Red floral gray sweater; lilt gray and black scarf, Bonnet's; Black Trilby hat, ACCLL

WOVEN BOWLER HAT.
White button-down, Giap; Brown wool bowler hat, ACCLL

DENIM FEDORA
Liz Claiborne denim jacket, Royal Count blue fedora hat, Rustan's Blue pencil-pin leather shoes, Giap

SM MEGAMALL IS PRA'S SHOPPING CENTER OF THE YEAR

SM Megamall recently received the Philippine Retailers Association's Shopping Center of the Year Award during its 2009 Outstanding Filipino Retailers and Shopping Center of the Year Night held recently at the Crowne Plaza in Ortigas Center.

This is the fourth time that an SM Supermall has been cited by the PRA since it launched the Shopping Center of the Year Award in 2002. SM City Baguio was earlier cited in 2005, and the SM Mall of Asia in 2007 and 2008.

Located along EDSA and Julia Vargas in the Ortigas Center, the SM Megamall created a lot of excitement when it was launched in 1991. At 230,000 square meters, it was not only mega in size but big in cutting edge concepts like the clustering of tenants; the Arkeds and the Art Center brought art to the people through its mall galleries; and the Mega Trade Hall.

Later on, it opened a Cyberzone on the Fourth Level, the Mega Strip, a restaurant row for the 24/7crowd along Julia Vargas, and the Chapel of the Eucharistic Lord on the Fifth Level.

Since that time, the mall has undergone several renovations, making it more mega and more exciting. Last August, it launched the Mega Atrium, a indoor mall within a mall with upscale stores and specialty restaurants for the upmarket crowd. It also features a Grand Chapel of the Eucharistic Lord that also has an Adoration Chapel.

More recently, it opened a state of the art Event Center on the Lower Ground Floor, which is designed for large concerts, exhibits, and performances. With a seating capacity for 1,200 people, it is envisioned to be a premiere events center in the Ortigas area.

It has also been on the forefront of environmental projects with sustainable features like the Sewage Treatment Plant and energy saving measures, as well as numerous activities like segregated waste cans, the Recycling/Market Fair where one can exchange trash for cash; the conferences like the Green Retail Agenda, and the Green Film Festival. Spearheading these activities is other SM Malls resulted

The SM Megamall Team

Receiving the award for SM Megamall as the Shopping Center of the Year are - (L-R) SM Prime Holdings President Hans T. Sy, DOTC President Annie Garcia, SM Megamall Mall Manager Ma Helen del Mundo and AVP for Operations Lou Bonio

In the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Excellence in Economy and Environment Award for SM Prime Holdings last year.

APPLE Sees, a Flawless Realist

What's your flawless factor?

By Larry Lavina
Contributor

WHO HASN'T HAD THE FANTASY OF having one's picture on a giant billboard along Edsa?

The usual precaution is one is not too likely to make that fantasy become reality because the usual bodies and faces that plaster us from the many billboards are digitally perfect things. Even in real life, fashion models, celebrities even sport heroes gleaming with youth-enhancing tapped stuffs to meet societal standards we can even term that larger than life material to be coveted and to have one very own billboard.

Pond Flawless, the country's leading aesthetic beauty clinic brings the Picture Flawless campaign, a movement, that encourages one to recognize the flawlessness in you. You can be a very young 9-year-old boy or female diva at 90. You maybe slim, sexy or very big and beautiful. You could be a billboard rock star; a path finder/artiste in affliction.

You may be a hairdresser or favorite teacher in school, anyone and everyone can join. Visit the Flawless clinics at SM malls. Picture Flawless booths with professional photographers and hair and makeup artists are ready to capture what makes you special. For a minimum purchase of P1,000 at any Flawless clinic, you extend the chance of being one of the Picture Flawless finalists. The winners of Picture Flawless, who will be identified based on the vote of the general public, will receive P500,000 and a year-long endorsement deal for Flawless, including their Comedy billboard.

So what's your Flawless factor? What makes you unique? Says Bobby Ty, CEO of Flawless, "Everyone's different, everyone's special. The campaign is a way for us to give back to the community, to reinvent our customers that there is beauty and flawlessness in uniqueness. Everybody is flawless in his/her own way."

Hence, the attributes are not limited to age, height, political ideal or gender since Picture Flawless celebrates that unique quality that makes you flawless, just the way you are. And since the Flawless team is flawlessly caring, a percentage of the proceeds will go to celebrity victims around the country.

The saying goes, in order to love someone else, you have to love yourself first. Love that characteristic that makes you unique and different...that flawless factor—and be confident! Visit Flawless booths at SM Megamall, Fairmall, SM2K, Bacoor, Manila, Pampanga, Lipa and Cebu.

LOOK mag survey . . .

From page H1

way that only I'll be able to see, like wearing sexy lingerie."

Another guy says, "It's like when we give women gifts, it's a thoughtful gesture on their part."

Stoked by celebrity endorsements by the likes of Kenneth Paliwan and "Sex and The City," the Brandism craze has taken off for most women, it goes beyond aesthetics.

"It's about what's going on in the heads," says Amanda. Ella, a 31-year-old banker says, "Everything feels more empowered, even something as ordinary as taking a bath."

Maria, a 30-year-old businesswoman, says, "My boyfriend prefers it that way because it doesn't become a distraction to anything he needs to do. Plus, it's easy for guys, especially during monthly periods."

"Sometimes, I get it done when I'm depressed," another respondent says. "It's like getting your nails done or shopping: it makes you feel better about yourself."

Read more about Flawless sites in the list on issue of LOOK magazine.

BAUME & MERCIER & ME

BAUME & MERCIER
GENEVE · 1830

ALEXIS

(From L-R) Atty. Kamalig, Mr. Carlo Singson, Mr. Hisashi Ishida, Mr. Glen D'Hont, Mr. Lorenzo Lim

Toshiba Corporation and NBA announce Marketing Partnership in the Philippines

Toshiba brings the thrilling world of the NBA into every Filipino's home through innovative products and exciting marketing promotions

MANILA – Toshiba and the National Basketball Association (NBA) announced a new marketing partnership in the Philippines during the Toshiba Product Launch Press Conference held at The Peninsula Hotel Makati. The alliance between the two leading brands of their respective fields will use various marketing platforms to bring NBA excitement to Filipino fans throughout the NBA season.

As one of the world's leading manufacturers of a diverse range of electronic products including notebook PCs, high-definition LCD TVs and refrigerators, Toshiba will utilize NBA's comprehensive marketing assets, media, and on-ground initiatives to showcase its innovative products to Filipino consumers.

As part of the partnership announcement today, Toshiba launched a new line of products at the press conference. Among them were the REGZA "RM800" and "ZM800" series LCD TVs, new Slim Series notebook PCs Portégé T110 and T130, and the new refrigerator GR-YG68P/PDA/M4P/PXP181 series. Toshiba's state-of-the-art products come with innovative features that enhance enjoyment of exciting NBA games and highlights on television, or on NBA International Broadband League Pass, a subscription service that offers fans access to a complete season of live NBA game webcasts on the website NBA.com.

As part of the campaign, Toshiba will be conducting product road shows in major shopping malls, tours in offices and schools starting from Christmas season.

makro
Christmas Super Specials
OFFERS VALID UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 2009

5+1
MATRIX Single Burner Gas Stove
P329

5+1
EUREKA Bread Toaster
P499

5+1
PROTECH Oven Toaster 9L
P729

10+1
MATRIX 2 Burner Gas Stove
P699

10+1
PROTECH Dry Flat Iron
P299

PHILIPS CD Sound Machine AD1
P1,990

PHILIPS DVD Player DVP3005
P2,290

BUY 1 TAKE 1
AMERICAN HOME Electric Kettle 1.7L
P599

SANSUI
P26,990

P150

P69.75

Visit us for MORE EXCITING OFFERS!!

HOME WORLD
Christmas trimmings
20% off*
now thru December 31
*on selected items
SM DEPARTMENT STORE

SM HOMEWORLD'S GIFT GALLERY

Home gift sets for the holidays
For your Christmas gift list, check out the smart selections from SM Homeworld.
SM Homeworld has linen gift sets, cutlery sets with colorful handles, and tea sets that are not only great on function, but also on design.
They are also affordable.
Check out SM Homeworld's gift gallery at all SM Department Stores.

ITEMS BELOW P 500

ALL I WANT THIS CHRISTMAS. This tea set includes a tea pot, sugar jug, milk jug, 4pcs saucer and 6 pcs cups

BRING ME HOME THIS CHRISTMAS. This stylish 16-piece cutlery set with black rubber handle comes with a rod organizer

BOX IT UP! 24-piece cutlery set with space saving rectfoot shaped organizer

This 24-piece cutlery set with rectfoot design handle is a perfect gift this holiday

ITEMS BELOW P 300

SM Homeworld's colorful ceramic mug set with matching tray

Sturdy designed 4-piece glass canister set

Homeworld 4 piece fruit designed ceramic mug set

Bath towel gift set with graphic embroidery design

ITEMS BELOW P 200

Stripes pastel colored microfiber face towel gift set

3oz. of three coffee mugs in different sizes and shapes

Pastel colored 6-piece face towel gift set

COOLPIX
An amazing breakthrough in kissing filters. Congratulations Manny.
COOLPIX S1000pj
An amazing breakthrough from Nikon

ENTERTAINMENT

Life & Times & Values

Mobile Alert: Text REG ON [SPACE] to 2400 | Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment | E-mail: entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

BOY ABUNDA, ON "KUYAMBUK," HIS new "Conversation" style show on ABS-CBN: "There are no stupid interviewers, only stupid interviewees. You need to know when to coddle the guest, gently advise you're not getting anywhere — be quick and sensitive to his strengths and limitations, so you know how to propel the exchange. It's a complicated dance."

OVERHEARD

THE KWAN Cantopop Singers rendered all-time Pinoy favorites for YA-Music audience.

GK says thank you, Melbourne

By Alice Gregorio-Nicolas
Contributor

WHAT A NIGHT!

Different voices, different characters—unique talents performing as a team.

Nov 7 in Melbourne, Australia, 10 Igloo-Australians were glued in their seats in Monash University's Robert Blackwood Concert Hall as the Ryan Cayabyab Singers rendered songs composed and arranged by maestro Ryan Cayabyab, who accompanied the group on the piano.

It was plain to see that the group—Ateneo Abreast; UST Conservatory of Music; Ave Grata; [illegible] Chorale; Kutob Tinawon (SY Concert Chorus); Vincent Evangelista (UST Singers); Puppet Rovales (soprano of the CP Bachelettes trio); Kyle Rivera and Jaime Narcelon Hagerney Philippines)—had really outmastered the audience. Sometimes mellow, sometimes hot, the songs—from

GK SAYS >

GARFIELD (by Jim Davis)

A. LIPAK BY JOEL ABRERA

PUGAD BABOY BY PH. JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOKOMOTS BY ELIZABETH CHONGCO

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

TULOOK BY HARIA COLL

BEH BY DANIEL SHELTON

ATOMIC AND WEEDY BY VINA GARCELLANO

KIBO MACHINE BY NIKKO ABRERA

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Tuley

	2	
7	4	8
5 2		9 3
	7 8	6
1		9
5	3 6	
6 7		5 4
4	5	2
	8	

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	8	7	6	9	3	5	4	1
9	5	6	1	4	7	3	2	8
4	1	3	8	2	5	6	9	7
8	6	1	9	3	2	4	7	5
7	3	9	4	5	1	2	8	6
5	4	2	7	6	8	1	3	9
1	2	4	5	8	9	7	6	3
3	7	8	2	1	6	9	5	4
6	9	5	3	7	4	8	1	2

Fil-Am jazz talents ...

From page A

DECCA/Gulfnet

music? It brings back fond memories of laughter, family get-togethers, parents, the special people in our lives. Most importantly it brings back a childlike reverence of the world. I reading something Bing Crosby once said: 'Unless we make Christmas an occasion to relive our blessings, all the cares in the world won't make it white.' He was right, you know. The ingredients distinctly spoiled about Christmas is the innocence and purity that we allow to sit in our hearts at this time of year. Wouldn't it be great if we just kept that spirit eternally?"

Back at end of the 43rd Christmas concert produced by multi-talented impresario Jack in Bigtide "It will be all about sharing the hope, joy and blessings of the season through beloved familiar songs. I always enjoy fun and laughter in the mix. My friends and I will pour out our hearts to give each one who comes through the doors a show where they can be caught up in that childlike moment." Details available on www.katsentertainment.net.

Reg's new line ...

From page B

unwanted residents of the Filipino spirit.

"Christmas will push through for the survivors, as it always does I'm an, no matter what happens," Regino said. "Food will fill their stomachs, but what we need to do is reach out to their hearts and souls and bring light back into their lives."

Regino didn't sit idly in the aftermath of the killer typhoon. With one assistant, she bought enough groceries and supplies to fill up 16 backpacks. "I didn't even consider how I should distribute them. I just knew I had to get food and water for the adults and milk for the kids."

She called up friends Mher Cosmingco Ansorena and Herbert Bautista for help, and the grocery items were distributed to evacuation centers in Pasig and Quezon City.

Regino is also proud of boyfriend Igor Alvarez's efforts, through the "Kaya Natin 'Yo" CD and concert. The is happy that the concert and album were successful. There were his voices. He broke all the barriers."

For a while, there was no network nor the sound. "All artists were united, helping the victims. All the proceeds will go to Ground Zero."

GK says thank you

From page B

stars, fashion and shoes-stopper from the 1960s. "I'm not 90s—let the nail-biting for now ... surprises.

Among the most applauded numbers were the all-star finale version "Timeless Sensation at Reading Ex," "Unconditional Love," "Islands Mix," "Do Gooder Mix," "Fantasy," "Remembering" and "Morning Glory."

This was a Grand Ridings show, which also featured kind talents Joey Stone and Jasmine Sison. Brad Kelso, Kenn Chua and the Grand Ridings Chorus.

Joyous thanks

Most frustrating was the mini-presentation of the Most Improved GK Village in Hillarys, Santol Island, with Grand Overall Raul Mercader receiving the audience that all their support for GK have maybe been in vain.

Hernandez cited countless members of the audience who had given not only money but also more real effort to help support GK projects.

The concert was a joyous way he said, to give back to support and nurturing Filipino friends.

E-mail the columnist at rcapada_0@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Manila Report," at http://blogs.inquirer.net/manilareport

Fil-Am jazz talents wow LA, Becca in Xmas show

LOS ANGELES—WE ARRIVED RIGHT-ruddy late, on the first night of the 5th Annual Fil-Am Jazz Festival last weekend at the Catalina Bar & Grill, LA's premier jazz club. We were glad to catch the last song of Charlie, a Filipina chanteuse famed in Japan, singing Stevie Wonder's "I'm Dolly." Charlie showed us why she's making waves internationally recording albums or performing live with the likes of **Michel Legrand**, **Herbie Hancock**, **Marcus Miller** and **Dave Matthews**. She was the first Filipino artist to perform at the Montreux Jazz Festival.

Guitarist **Angelo Pizarro** electrified the packed venue with several numbers. The audience couldn't have enough of the Seattle-based guitar virtuoso and composer.

Blue Breed fascinated the crowd with his vocal flair and soaring to **George Gershwin**'s "Beckoning Rhythm" which he infused with Filipino sounds, climaxing with a playful "Bi'ung!" Mica, winner of the London International Jazz Vocal Competition in 2006, segued into a heartfelt rendition of **Johnny Mandel**'s "A Time for Love." He got the jams swinging again with his playful "Sinful."

The evening ended on a soaring note when Mica was joined by Charlie, Angelo and the talents we missed—singers Charmaine Clamor and Sandra Wise, pianist Lili Lualdi and musicians Eric Reed, Abe Laboriel, Jr. and Tony Kadleck—for the finale, "Fine Night On Mount."

Earlier, Tatang received the Lifetime Achievement Award on behalf of his father, **Eddie Battistella**, from **Gabby Mijares**, son of the late great Basil Mijares.

Today and tomorrow, at 8:30 p.m., the Fil-Am Jazz Festival moves to the Triad Theatre in New York with a slightly different cast. Mica, Charmaine, Tatang, Abe and Sandra will be joined by **Annie Braid**, **Derek Shevenguth** and 2006 Thelonious Monk Competition winner, alto sax player **Jaz Sawyer**. More on this at www.jazzphil-usa.com.

* * *

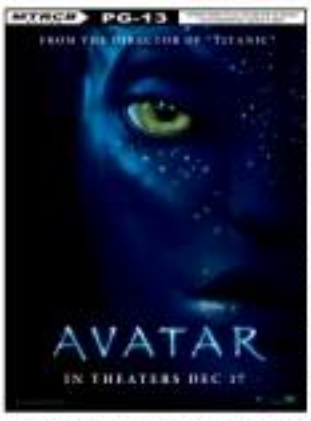
Steven Stallone stars in her first Christmas show in LA 6 p.m. tomorrow at the Heritage Pavilion in Anaheim, California. In "Christmas with Becca Stallone & Friends," the singer shares unique interpretations of traditional Christmas songs.

Special guest, our man Bert de Leon, will do some upbeat numbers. Becca's other guests include Prime Son Ensemble (PSE), the award-winning Filipino a cappella choir in Saudi Arabia to join and win a gold place diploma in the World Choir games."

Becca said, "Set your, forged in perform in December. I may have mentioned it during a TV interview two years ago but it just never came to pass. Donna, dancers, loops, dreams and the proverbial. We gotta, let's do something together aligned, and now it's finally happening. Woohoo!"

She added: "Why do I love Christmas so

ELAIN O.



Reg's new line: Stand-up comic

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

REGINE VELASQUEZ DIDN'T KNOW HOW to interact with the 600 fashion victims and heroes invited to the taping of the GMA-7 "Christmas special, "After the Rain."

She told Inquirer Entertainment, "I had a zero threat, but I did my stand-up routine to make them laugh. I think they had fun."

The Bayani-helmed gathered the special guests from evacuation centers in Rizal, Laguna, Pasig, Marikina and Pangasinan, and treated them to a gala dinner, dance party and live concert with Regine, Bob Ledesma, Jaya, Jaya, Ilyla, among others, at the network's studio 7.

The two-hour special, directed by Lorie Ignacio (airing Sunday), features the stories of Tropical Storm "Ondoy" survivors Jessie Arizapa, Ella Jose and RJ Valdezand the orphaned duo Honor of Refuge.

"We hope to uplift and inspire others through their experiences," said Regine. "More than losing possessions, losing hope is a bigger tragedy."

During the making of the special, she said, she volunteered with her own eyes the world.

BEATRIZ

WHY AM I LOSING HAIR? WHAT SHOULD I DO TO STOP IT?

Each day many women live in mental agony because of hairloss. For men, losing one's hair is not so rare, but for women it can be a thousand times worse psychologically. You can end up depressed with lower self-esteem and suffer increased worries and insecurities. Free yourself from hairloss now. Free yourself from anxieties and fears!

Why am I losing hair?

There are a lot of factors that can cause hairloss in women.

- **Genetic** – this is the case of Androgenetic Alopecia (Female Pattern Baldness). It's the women's reaction to dihydrotestosterone (DHT) that blocks hair production and causes hair to thin out.
- **Stress** – situations with extreme pressure, anxiety or trauma can prematurely shift countless hairs from growing to resting (telogen) phase. The result: severe hair fall.
- **Hormonal imbalance** – giving birth or certain diseases can be such a distress to the hair follicles and cause them to shut down for awhile. In just a few weeks, the hair will start to shed.
- **Autoimmune disorder** – the body mistakenly attacks the hair follicles and disrupts the hair growth. Most cases can end up with coin-sized bald patches.
- **Medications** – chemotherapy is the most common treatment where countless hair cells are destroyed. Patients undergoing chemotherapy can experience an advanced state of hairloss.

What should I do to stop hairloss and regain thicker, healthier hair?

In the Philippines, there's a hairloss centre that offers technologically-advanced treatments and personalized hair recovery programs especially formulated for women: **Svenson**. Look forward to flaunting more lush, more lustrous locks in no time!

SCALP-CORRECTIVE – thoroughly stimulates dandruff, nourishes the scalp and recovers its healthy condition. Save your scalp now, save your hair sadly!

ULTRA HAIR REPRODUCER – it multiplies hair growth while reducing moisture to make weak strands stronger. Hair becomes fuller, shinier and more manageable!

ULTRA-CODY VOLUMIZER – stops severe hairloss and helps recover hair's original volume and vitality. So you'd start looking more beautiful with more hair!

At Svenson, you'll never suffer from hairloss again! Call now at **892-SVEN (8247)/234-0851 (Cebu)** for a FREE private consultation.

Judge for yourself

I USED TO JUDGE MANY OF THE awards competitions in town, but I've screened dozen of mass of them because I've realized, sadly, that they aren't reliable gauges of excellence.

What's an award for, if it doesn't unfailingly and reliably honor outstanding achievement? So, I've decided to stop being an accessory to the "crime" and generally suggest judging competitions, period.

Why have many tilts lost their credibility? First: Because some competitions have grown to be quite profitable, new tilts are being launched each season—for all the wrong reasons (profit, power, influence, etc.), thus further corrupting and diluting an already questionable field.

Second: The level of judging has markedly gone down. Time was when only people of proven acumen and objectivity were tapped to serve as judges. These days, however, the field has been infiltrated by "luminaries" who aren't experts in the field being judged and are there simply because they're well-connected or used the publicity to further their agenda/reputations.

To further illustrate, some of these so-called judges don't even bother to view all of the entries they're supposed to evaluate. How can they possibly determine who's the best? They can't—and don't.

They are subjective and imprecise "standards" like "renowned" panelists—or they seek advice from better-informed people, or succumb to persuasion from genuine people—and then come up with questionable and sometimes even shocking decisions that make more knowledgeable people in the field lose respect for the entire awards process itself.

Worst of all, are the jurors who assign "nonsense" or "nominal" judges to do the work for them. They don't have time to view the entries themselves...so, why did they take on the job in the first place?

We're not even talking about "decisions" that have, in fact, been bought for a hefty price, which is bribery or support!

It's awards season—once more, as heart-pound for the latest round of dubious "winners" and downright travesties who will run up the stage, all smiles and bubbling in breathless gratitude, as knowledgeable people in the audience look at each other in confusion or dismay, muttering, "Is (or she) serious?"

The well-informed can protect themselves with their knowledge, but what about the general public? It believes in awards because they're supposed to provide standards or touchstones for viewers to know what's outstanding or excellent about the entertainment they're viewing, the better for them to make their own standards. If "official" awards can't be trusted, where are they to turn for this service, what's an "ordinary" viewer to do?

The well-informed can protect themselves with their knowledge, but what about the general public? It believes in awards because they're supposed to provide standards or touchstones for viewers to know what's outstanding or excellent about the entertainment they're viewing, the better for them to make their own standards. If "official" awards can't be trusted, where are they to turn for this service, what's an "ordinary" viewer to do?

First, decide for yourself which competitions' verdicts are reliable and deserve your trust. Believe only or them and disbelieve the rest. Second, develop your own critical skills, so you can't be made a fool of. Third, don't give so much importance to awards—this way, they will lose some of their power to impress or persuade, which is why biased or incompetent jurors want to subvert them, in the first place.

VIEWFINDER
Antoine U. Flores

LIVING Stars

Alice Evonia G. Velarde

WISH LIST

Charice

I ALREADY HAVE WHAT I WANTED THIS year (a mini-boat, so I wish only for good health for me and my family. And I hope to see an end to our country's problems. —Raynard Sam Dhegu Jr.

Audie Gemora is back where he belongs / Page J4

Kleo Rustia

I ENJOY READING "Feats and Wonders of the Ancients" (by the editors of Time-Life Books). I've all ways been fascinated by ancient cultures and this book is easy reading but full of information and insights. I hope to visit Machu Picchu in Peru and the Giza Pyramids in Egypt someday. It's great to know that ancient people were able to build all those amazing structures hundreds of years ago. It's surprising to learn that these technologies were so advanced and yet their civilizations disappeared from the face of the earth. —Raynard Sam Dhegu Jr.

Ladies of 'Nine' at world preem in London, Dec. 3

PENELOPE Cruz, Nicole Kidman, Dame Judi Dench

visit: www.smcinema.com

SM CINEMA

ONLY AT

IMAX THEATRE

and

SM DIGITAL THEATER

BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW & GET A FREE AVATAR MINI POSTER!

metro manila

luzon

visayas • mindanao

ALL MOVIE SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

CINEMA ACCESS: 395-5555

MOVIEWORLD

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMA MOVIE GUIDE

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA

1 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
2 BAD LIEUTENANT
3 PREDATOR
4 DIARY OF A NYMPHOMANIAC
5 MALICIOUS BASTERDS
6 A CHRISTMAS CAROL (DIGITAL 3D)
7 tentative: WALANG HANGGANG PAALAM
8 CAMPUS CRUSH
9 2012
10 NINJA ASSASSIN

MANILA

1 A CHRISTMAS CAROL
2 PREDATOR
3 MALICIOUS BASTERDS
4 BAD LIEUTENANT
5 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
6 CAMPUS CRUSH
7 NINJA ASSASSIN

METRO EAST

1 NINJA ASSASSIN
2 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
3 MALICIOUS BASTERDS
4 PLANET 51
5 DIARY OF A NYMPHOMANIAC
6 2012
7 PARANORMAL ACTIVITY
8 PREDATOR

NOVALICHES

1 NINJA ASSASSIN
2 PREDATOR
3 MALICIOUS BASTERDS
4 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON

FORUM ROBINSONS

1 MALICIOUS BASTERDS
2 2012
3 PREDATOR
4 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON

STA. ROSA

1 2012
2 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
3 INGLORIOUS BASTERDS
4 AMELIA

LIPA

1 NINJA ASSASSIN
2 INGLORIOUS BASTERDS
3 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
4 ASTROBOY

SAN MARINO

1 INGLORIOUS BASTERDS
2 2012
3 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
4 ASTROBOY
5 ALL ABOUT STEVE

STARMILLS

1 PARANORMAL ACTIVITY
2 NINJA ASSASSIN
3 2012
4 JENNIFER'S BODY
5 INGLORIOUS BASTERDS
6 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON

IMUS

1 INGLORIOUS BASTERDS
2 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
3 PARANORMAL ACTIVITY
4 ASTROBOY

ANGELES

1 NINJA ASSASSIN
2 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
3 ALL ABOUT STEVE
4 INGLORIOUS BASTERDS

TACLOBAN

1 INGLORIOUS BASTERDS
2 NINJA ASSASSIN
3 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON

DUMAGUETE

1 PLANET 51
2 INGLORIOUS BASTERDS
3 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON

BACOLOD

1 INGLORIOUS BASTERDS
2 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
3 A CHRISTMAS CAROL
4 NINJA ASSASSIN
5 2012
6 JENNIFER'S BODY

ILOILO

1 NINJA ASSASSIN
2 INGLORIOUS BASTERDS
3 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
4 ALL ABOUT STEVE
5 PARANORMAL ACTIVITY
6 2012

CEBUANA

1 INGLORIOUS BASTERDS
2 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
3 2012
4 500 DAYS OF SUMMER

ILOCOS NORTE (NOW OPEN!)

1 2012
2 NINJA ASSASSIN
3 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON

NOW OPEN!

3 STATE-OF-THE-ART CINEMAS

MOVIEWORLD ILOCOS NORTE

- World Class Cinemas
- Dolby Digital Sound
- High Picture Quality
- Best Cinema Equipment
- Fantastic Seats
- Great Snacks

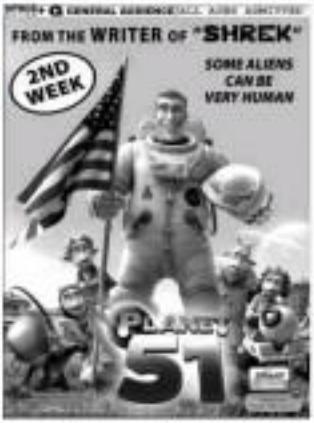
Back where he belongs

ALDEN'S own bedroom: As a teen, his room was on the second floor.

THE FAMILY room, equipped with a home theater, is his 10-year-old son's fave spot.

COLLECTION of sketches/paintings by Carlo Caparas, Freddie Saracho and Yani

'I will enjoy this place while I can'



Back where he belongs

EXCLUSIVE
NOW SHOWING AT GLORIETTA 4, GREENBELT 3 & TRINOMA CINEMAS
"TOUCHING, HILARIOUS & UNFORGETTABLE"
★★★★
"AN ABSOLUTE DELIGHT... AMONG THE TOP ANIMATED FILMS OF THE YEAR"

By Maxine R. Cruz
Photos by Jon Cotoco Punzalan

AFTER OVER A decade of moving in a rented apartment, award-winning stage actor-director Audie Gemora is finally living his dream.

Audie recently reclaimed his parents' old home in Makati City from longtime tenants. From his apartment in Dasmariñas Village in Quezon City, Audie and his 16-year-old son Akihiro moved in here last May.

"My parents gave this house to me right after I finished college. But since I had no (real) income at the time, I decided to rent it out," said Audie in his unlisted Living Room into the 1,200-sq.m. house in posh Dasmariñas Village.

"Never mind that I had a lot of money (referring to P. 2 mil) to myself, life is short. I should enjoy the house while I still can."

The two-storey house was built in 1975. Audie said it cost his parents only P400,000 to have it(when) constructed. The wood used for walls and furnishings were brought all the way from the family farm in Negros.

"During my parents' time, to have a house made of wood is a status symbol. The hardwood used here is really strong. We've never had termites. It's also easy to maintain. The older the wood gets, the more beautiful it becomes," said Audie.

He is excited to spend his first Christmas here with husband Thelmo. "The two of us decorated our Christmas tree right after Halloween. We spent the whole day doing that. It was a great bonding moment for us," said the actor, who is also president and artistic director of Trumpets Playhouse.

Audie said a large portion of the money he allowed for the renovation of the house went to tearing down old structures and building the front area.

"I'd like the lanai and garden to be the center of activity in the house. We held my son's 20th birthday party here," he added. "On Christmas day, I'm thinking of putting up a show for the Trumpets cast members. We'll have tables and chairs in the garden and make the lanai

MORE ▸

HOME BODY

ANTIQUE cabinet from furniture maker named Imperial

The country's one and only true private cinema

With its very own lounge area where you can throw parties before or after your private screening.

Uniquely intimate.
Artfully modern.
Perfect holiday treat.
GREENBELT

EXCLUSIVE
NOW ON ITS 2ND WEEK AT GLORIETTA 4 CINEMAS
★★★★★
"THE BEST AMERICAN DRAMA OF THE YEAR"
"ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF 2009"